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## PRACTICAL

# DISCOURSES

ON SEVERAL

# Important Subjects.

In Two VOLUMES.

By the Late REVEREND

DANIEL WILLIAMS, D. D.

Published singly by HIMSELF, and now collected by the Appointment of his Will.

To which is prefixed,

Some Account of his LIFE and CHARACTER.

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A

# SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE

### SOCIETIES

FOR

Reformation of MANNERS,

IN

DUBLIN,

July 18. 1700.



Vol. II.

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SEPTEMBOOK

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Committee of the William

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#### TO THE

## Societies for Reformation.



HIS title wherewith you are adorned, is so divine, beneficent, and truly catholick, that your request obliged

my compliance in preaching the following sermon, under all the disadvantages of a traveller. Yet had I conferred with slesh and blood, those many accurate discourses you have on this subject, must have render'd my hurry of business, and want of books, an insuperable argument against the publication of it.

But being persuaded the bible is not only the sittest book to justify the truth of the duty insisted on, but attended with greatest authority to inforce it on the conscience, the censures of the polite for my want of other ornaments, cannot

A 2

deter

deter me from exposing what your think serviceable to your good design, as that which I am sure is not only according to God's word, but undertaken in obedience to it.

I am not ashamed the world should know how my love for Ireland exalts my joy at your attempts to suppress that wickedness which alone can ruin it, and to promote practical religion, which must cause its slourishing against all assaults: They who less affect you, ought to be thankful for your good success herein, and ascribe the sudden properity of this land, to God's approbation of your vigorous endeavours to reform it.

The argument whereby I urge all to affift in your blessed work, is too evident to be resisted by any, who account service to God either a privilege or a duty; and next in force to that I published on the same occasion in London; viz. That they who promote national reformation

tion are on Christ's side, and they who neglect it are of the devil's party, in the contest managed by them as the heads of their respective opposite kingdoms.

The consequence of your undertaking may excuse my importunity, because I am under conviction, that when you become remiss, or altogether unsuccessful, this nation will be under more than a probable presage of sudden desolation, and much severer than any that hath befallen it heretosore.

If any think me too close and plain, faithfulness to my Lord whom you serve, and a peculiar regard for this land which you would save, must afford the only apology I dare make. As the enterprize you are inspired to engage in, is too fully authorized by divine and human laws, to be thought unjust, and too plainly commanded, and important in its effects, to be esteemed indifferent; so its too con-

A 3 trary

trary to satan's interest, and the degenerate inclinations of mankind, to be executed without great fortitude, vigour, wisdom, self-denial, and union; or to keep your hearts by these in a fixed disposition to pursue it, without rich supplies of grace, and great care and labour with your own spirits, whence all remains of sin are not yet expelled.

Many do join with you in prayer, that your fitness may improve by your work, your resolution by your difficulties, your union by ill designs to break it, your success by opposition, and the purity and sedateness of your own spirits, by all your endeavours to reform others; which (among the rest) is heartily desired by,

Your Servant in the

Work of the LORD,

Daniel Williams.



#### PROV. XXVIII. 4.

They that for sake the law, praise the wicked; but such as keep the law, contend with them.



HE text includes fo full a SERM. distribution of mankind, that VII. none of us can be exempted; one part for sakes the law, others keep it; some praise

the wicked, others contend with them;

fome are wicked, others are godly.

THE contrariety of what they are diftinguished by, is extreme; one renounceth that rule which the other facredly observes, viz. the divine law; the one approves and commends those, whom the other reproves and punisheth, viz. the wicked. And no doubt the difference extends equally to what is implied, though not expressed; i. e. the good man renounceth those lusts and customs, which the wicked fubmit to as their governing law, and praifeth the righteous with whom the ungodly do contend.

IT might feem an unaccountable wonder, that men should thus greatly differ in A 4 their

105.

SERM. their rules, behaviour, favourites, and ad-VII. verfaries, were the fprings of this contrariety altogether unknown: But that wonder will cease, when we consider that these distinguished persons have spirits, tempers, leaders, and supreme ends and designs, more contrary than their very behaviour is. Nav. were it not for the unhealed remains of fins in the godly, and fome operations of the Holy Ghost on the wicked, the difference between these men would be as great as between established angels, and apostate devils; and when I have said this, can any of you forbear to cry out, Oh how necessary is regeneration! and how great a work must that be, which so changeth a man from what himself once was, as well as others!

> THE last part of the text I shall insist on, because it most properly answers the present occasion: Such as keep the law, contend with them, i. e. with the wicked.

> THE words give us, I. The character of a good man. 2. An instance whereby the fincerity of that character is made good.

I. THE character of a good man, He keeps the law; that which others forfake, he fets before him as his directing light, Pfal exix and a determining rule; Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. What this injoineth, he fets himself to observe; what it forbids, he is watchful to avoid: He acknowledgeth the obliging force

force of the will of God, whether it be SERM. fignified to him by the light of nature, or VII. positive precepts and institutions. He is subject to every part, as well as to any: I have put away none of thy statutes from me. Pfal. xviii. He observes it at all times as well as some, and in secret as well as publick. To this he adheres against all discouragements, as well as when most countenanced; he will keep it, tho' all others should forsake it; Pfal. exix. yea, declineth it not, tho' the proud have 51. him greatly in derision, for obeying it.

This divine law effectually prescribeth to him what he will believe and profes; it formeth his inward temper, regulates his thoughts, words, and behaviour; hereby he frameth his defires, defigns, and refolves. Obedience thereto is with him a fufficient reason for his undertakings, and that which his chief respect is to, in whatever he deliberately performs. To exemplify this in his inclinations, affections, and carriages, is his chief endeavour and aim; he prays, strives, and industriously contriveth and watcheth to be compleat in the whole will Col.iv. 12. of God, and walketh in all the command- Luke i. 6. ments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. Finally, wherein he is defective, or offends, he feriously blameth himself; bewails his fault, hates his-fin, and fincerely refolves amendment by greater watchfulness, and more fervent applications to Christ for the affistance of his Spirit.

VII. the law in a gospel sense; his obedience is evangelical, though in many things it be short of that which is legal or perfect.

2. WE have one instance whereby the fincerity of this character is made good: They contend with the wicked; q. d. The behaviour of men towards the wicked shews whether themselves keep or forsake the law. Its a plain characteristick, if they praise the wicked, they are men who forfake the law; but if they contend with fuch, they are keepers of the law. Whatever effectually inclines men to keep the law, will compel them to contend with the wicked; as that which prevails with men to forfake it will difincline them to contend with fuch. Its indeed not to be expected that fuch as live in stated rebellion against the will of God, should oppose the profligate; but it is so decent, congruous, and necessary, for the keepers of the law, to oppose the wicked, and therefore to be expected, that God fets it down as a fixed diftinguishing property of fuch, They contend with the wicked. You will find them thus employed against violent transgressors, and thereby discriminated from them.

I SHALL, in some few positions, explain the words, and thereby come to state that observation, which will more directly support you in the work of reformation, and justify your engaging therein.

1. Keeping

(1.) Keeping the law is a fit description of SERM. the faithful subjects and servants of the liwing God, and fuch are intended thereby. The fervants of God are variously denominated, as men fearing God, lovers of God, believers, faints, godly, righteous, &c. But all these titles center in, and refer to this in the text; they keep the law. For this law is the measure of all goodness, all true excellency of spirit, and all regularity of practice do lie in a conformity to this rule. This perfect law appoints all that's truly good; and all that is accepted with God is done with a respect of obedience to this will of his. Whatever justly bears the name of any grace or virtue, must be answerable to what this defineth to be such a grace or virtue, or it is no better than an hypocritical image. Moreover, the truth of the highest graces must be adjudged by their operative efficacy to the obedience of this law: Faith James ii. without this is dead; and our Saviour de-20. termines the integrity of love in this manner: If you love me, keep my commandments. Yea, John xiv. his Apostle saith, This is love, that we walk 15; after his commandments. Not that this is the formal notion of love, but it is fuch a necessary effect of it, that it is no true Christian love which is too weak to produce obedience.

Now who is a keeper of the law? none but he who hath renounced his own will and humour, and is refigned to the divine will.

VII. what wilt thou have me to do? And is this any other than a fervant and subject of the living God; even one who hath freely accepted God in Christ for his supream lord and law-giver, upon which his relation of servant and subject is founded. But doth this devotedness confine itself to a meer profession of obedience, however solemn it be? No, there must be real performance Rom. vi. to make that good: His we are whom we obey. But this may suffice to evidence that to keep the law, and to be God's faithful

fervants and subjects, are equipollent terms.

(2.) Offenders committing gross and notorious crimes, are design'd by the wicked in the text. Not bad men whose crimes are conceased, for notice cannot be taken of such: neither can one be called wicked for meer insirmities; for though Job could not acquit himself of such, yet he appeals to God,

Jobx. 7. Thou knowest I am not wicked. The perfons therefore chiefly to be contended with, are such as commit flagitious crimes; crimes which infect others, defile the land, and stigmatize the offender; of which sort are idolatry, blasphemy, prophane swearing, cursing, sabbath prophanation, murder, whoredom, thests, drunkenness, &c.

(3.) Contending with the wicked, imports all just and due methods to repel the wickedness of transgressors. The difference between good and bad men is fixed, each

pleads

pleads his respective cause, pursues his pro- SERM. per design, acteth his own inclination, pro- VII. pagates his own likeness, and abets his party and leader. Christ and his interest command the strength of his subjects, in oppofition to fatan and his followers: Satan as the head of the apostacy employs his followers in opposition to Christ and his reforming purposes: Great is the contradic- Mat. xii. tion, and the contest vehement and exten- 38. five. The wicked are intent to restrain the godly from adhering to the laws of Christ their fovereign, and hence violence and persecution have their rise: On the other hand, the subjects of Christ endeavour to stop the deluge of impiety; they reason, exhort, pray, and live down immoralities; these do what they can to reform the world, as the others struggle to pervert it. They would rejoice that their instructions and intreaties were successful to reclaim the profligate; but when these avail not, they instance their zeal by a sharper testimony against crying provocations, and to their power fubserve mens amendments by what embitters notorious crimes.

MAGISTRATES become a terror to evil doers, by the sword of justice; ministers rebuke and inflict church censures; parents and masters apply the correcting rod, lest sin grow by the impunity of children and servants.

Object.

SERM. Object. Some will fay, these are oblig'd VII. by relation and office to contend with offending correlates, but what obligation and power hath one neighbour or equal to embitter sin in another?

Anho. NEIGHBOURS and equals are obliged to reprove the faults of one another, Levit. xix. it's God's express charge; Thou shalt in any wife rebuke thy neighbour, and not fuffer fin upon bim. This is by no means to be omitted, nor should any pretence excuse from it: Thou shalt rebuke him in any wife; they must be the prophane imitators of Gen. iv. 9. Cain, who fay, Am I my brother's keeper? What is it to me, if he fwear or be drunk? Let him look to himself, he is none of my charge; but fuch language is an affront to God's authority, who enacts, that thou shalt reprove him, and requires the finner to accept of thy reproof. You must tell him the evil and danger of his wicked course; his amendment you must thus attempt, however displeasing it may be to him to bear it, or to yourselves to intermeddle in it.

Object. But suppose it be a duty to reprove by words, sure we may rest at that, whether the offender resorm or no.

1. Answ. You must stop at this, if you lived where no punishments are enacted against those crimes which your reproof is unavailable to reform. In such a Sodom as allows the fore-mentioned enormities,

you

you must be satisfied with Lot to intreat, SERM. I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly; the despised reprover must not usurp the sword of the magistrate, but grieve at the abominations he wants authority to punish; the case is the same as to all such offences the law of the land takes no cognizance of, when other crimes be punishable by its institutions.

2. Answ. But verbal reproof will not be sufficient, where unreformed crimes are punishable by the law. If words will reclaim, 'tis well; but where these reclaim not, you are obliged to endeavour to reform transgressors by legal severities, and inforce despised reproof by such punishments as they will more regard: An evil Prov. xvii. man seeketh only rebellion, therefore a cruel 11. messenger shall be sent against him; and this private persons should do by complaints to fuch as are authorized to judge, and inflict the penalties enacted. Informing in fuch cases is the necessary work of some; for if there be none to convict offenders, the punishment is enacted in vain against the crimes they are guilty of, feeing it cannot be executed: Therefore as the declaring of Deut. xvii. mens faults to the magistrates is supposed 5. Deut. xxi. to judicial censures, so the very parent was 20. obliged to inform against that debauched fon, whom his own correction would not restrain. Nay, several think that very text, Reprove not a scorner, excuseth from ver- Prov. ix. 8, bal

SERM. bal reproof, only by exposing him to pu-VII. nishments more severe, which private persons cannot otherwise do, than by information; neither should any esteem this a reproach, for it was not accounted a work

Ezr. ix. 1. too mean for princes to be employed in.

HAVING made it plain, that fuch as keep the law is a periphrafis of the servants and subjects of the living God; and that the wicked here, are such as are found committing gross crimes; also that contending includeth severe penalties as well as reproof by words: I am sure the text is a sufficient ground for this observation.

Doct. Such as would approve themselves the subjects and servants of the living God, ought, nay, will, by just severities as well as reproof, endeavour the reformation of no-

torious offenders.

This doctrine enlarged and altered into other words, is the same as to say; he whose heart is right with God, will, (in this nation, where good laws are enacted against wickedness) not only reprove, but duly convict and bring to legal punishment, such as he finds to be cursers, swearers, prophaners of the Lord's-day, whoremongers, drunkards, &c. he will not forbear this for fear of shame, let who will reproach him; he'll do it, tho' his trade be in danger, and his person threatned and exposed.

THE text, as before explained, is a fufficient proof of the doctrine, but sad experience perience acquainting us, how much harder SERM. it is to prevail with people to do what is VII. their duty, than to prove it to be so; I shall not only add some further evidence for this duty from the argument included in the doctrine, but endeavour to plead that argument with your consciences; that if possible I may bring such to attempt the reformation of others, who have hitherto neglected it, and invigorate the hearts of those who have therein so laudably engaged.

CAN any argument be likelier than this to persuade all men to use due ways to reform offenders, that you cannot appear the real fervants of Christ, if you omit it? Will any thing so compel such to this work who think they are his fervants, as a demonstration that you have not the temper nor spirit of his servants, but are meer hypocritical pretenders, if you neglect it? And how can such who are his faithful servants be so excited to zeal for this work, as by convincing evidence, that if you be remiss, you so far offer violence to the instincts of your renewed nature? you difregard the bonour and interests of your Blessed Lord; you frustrate the defign of that relation to which you are admitted; you counter-act the genuine dispositions of all who are fincerely devoted to God's fervice; you defert the party to which you are united; you fayour fatan and his cause, whom you have renounced; and neglect that real felicity VOL. II. which SERM. which you are determined to pursue. Now VII. if fuch confiderations remove not your indifferency, and fecure you not against fear and idleness in this great design, what will?

> ALL these motives will occur, but the great argument I shall more directly infift on is that which the doctrine presents to us, viz. That none approve themselves the faithful servants of God, who do not endeavour the reformation of notorious offenders. As for the other point, viz. that this endeavour must be by severities as well as by reproof, or milder ways, I think already proved, and therefore shall less enlarge on that.

> Now, my well-beloved friends! would not you be found among the loyal fubjects and faithful fervants of your Creator and Redeemer? Yea, do not all of you profess to be fo? Now God's challenge as to this foremention'd case, as well as others, is

Mal. i. 6. strict, If I be a master, where is my fear; if I be a father, where is my honour? If I be your master, shew it by pleading my cause against transgressors; by that service shew I am indeed your Lord, and you my fervants. The time is haftening when all disguises will be taken off, and God shall make an apparent difference between fuch 18. as ferve him in reality, and fuch as put him off with meer pretence; therefore be now willing to endure fuch convictions from his word, as he will fasten by his sentence

when

Mal. iii.

when he comes to judge your state by this SERM. as the rule of judgment. Let no soul guilty VII. as to this very matter of reforming others, vainly support his pretence to God's service; for if you live in a stated neglect of resisting sin, and endeavours to reform the wicked, you are not a servant of God's: If you omit this, whatever you call yourselves, you do want the great essentials which constitute the temper, disposition and behaviour of those who are God's servants in reality. This will appear if you consider,

honour. Can any of you doubt whether a man can be God's fervant, who hath no zeal for his glory? whereas if you know any thing of religion, you must acknowledge that the glory of God is the chief end of every good man; and to that it's impossible to be indifferent. I must have a zeal for my chief end, and when that's exposed, I cannot but resent it, and endeavour its vindication and security with great concernedness of mind.

Now wherein is God more dishonoured than by open flagitious crimes? His sacred name is despised by common oaths; his vengeance play'd with by curses; his day polluted by prophaning the sabbath; the authority of our Almighty God, and of his laws, are trampled on by these and other open sins. When men dare declare Isa iii. 9. their sins as Sodom, they bid desiance to his

SERM. government, they slight his threatnings, VII. they condemn his precepts as unjust, they contemn his promised rewards as trisles, they openly avow the empire of the devil, they justify man's apostacy in the view of the world, and to their power they rase out the divine image, and shut out the spirit's operations, which would, if complied with, produce in the soul those impresses of God's perfections, wherein he is most properly glorisied.

And can any one who serves and loves his God, forbear to oppose this? Must not Num.xxii. the zeal of all such kindle as *Phineas*'s did?

Will not he take hold of all opportunities to vindicate the laws, and affert the government of his redeemer, benefactor and

ruler?

2. If you neglect the reforming of others, Mat. xxii. you show no true compassion or love to the souls 30. of finners. Love to our neighbour is one half of God's law; our neighbour's foul is his better part, and therefore it's benefit is to be most attended as an evidence of the fincerity of that love to him, which our Lord requires in his fervants. Moreover, love to men is an effential part of godlines; for wherein are we like God, who is love, if love be a stranger to us? Nor can any thing be a groffer contradiction than to pretend subjection to Christ, and yet renounce love to our neighbour: And no less irreconcilable would it be to love men, and

yet fuffer them to destroy themselves if we SERM. are capable to prevent it, by stopping their VII. felf-ruining course, and forcing them to When perfons openly commit confider. their horrid villanies, their fins go before- 1 Tim. 5. hand to judgment. And can you with any 24. face profess to love such men, whilst you tamely endure them to proceed for want of a warning by reproof, or fixing that warning by punishment when reproof is ineffectual? In which last case, Ah! be thou reformed without penal restraint, is no more an evidence of hearty love than, Ah! be thou clothed when garments are denied. It's no light matter to be accessory to the damnation of fouls; and be fure there is a fecret enmity in you against them, whose case requires your utmost pity, and yet it will not move you to do what you can towards their falvation, no not to affift the magistrate to inflict those penalties which may bring offenders to themselves.

3. If you neglect reformation-work, you have not a just concern for the welfare of the community. A man truly devoted to God, will serve his generation; a publick A&s xiii. Spirit inspires him, and a common good is 36. dearer to him than his own particular affairs:

David is their pattern when he saith, If I Psalm exxxvii. 6 prefer not Jerusalem above my chiefest joy, let my right-hand forget her cunning. The servant of God is so far under the power of self-denial, as to esteem the welfare of the B 3 body

SERM. body of his people, in itself preferable to his VII. own; and less than this cannot be inferred, as the meaning of the words of Moses and Paul, to whatever transport you assign their wishes. Now its impossible to have a publick spirit, and not strive to reform the wicked; because a general mischief is much promoted by unsubdued vices, and the publick good greatly depends upon reformation. This will appear, if you consider how far.

(1.) Uncontrouled vices do corrupt

a people.

(2.) UNREFORMED vices expose a na-

tion to judgments.

(1.) Uncontrouled vices do corrupt a people. Evil examples infect and enfnare; and where fin goes unpunished, it spreads the faster, because it appears so innocent a thing as not to deserve correction. How violently will men be drawn into those crimes whereto degenerate nature inclineth, when they find all feem to approve of them, because none call the most notorious offenders to account? The torrent of impiety must rise in that place, where many allure, and none rebuke it. But furely the best men in such a region must be base, selfish, and cowardly; it can never agree with a publick spirit to sit still when you see the plague to spread, a plague which so defileeth, enflaveth, debaseth, disordereth, and perverts your countrymen and fellow citizens: All which is fulfilled by the immo- SERM. ralities which are unrepelled by punish- VII. ments.

(2.) Unreformed vices expose a nation to judgments. Gross transgressions are called crying fins, because they cry aloud to heaven for desolating punishments; where these abound, the Lord will avenge. This righteous governor of the world will not fuffer proclaimed wickedness to go unpunished, no not where his worship is frequented; yea, he is furer to visit his profesfing people than any other, for their abominations: You only have I known of all the Amos iii. families of the earth, therefore I will punish 2. you for all your iniquities. Calamities hang over that place where rebellion is committed against God; and certainly he whose quiver is fo full of destructive arrows, cannot be at a loss how to visit all ranks of men with judgments, of which they shall be fensible, and against which they cannot preserve themselves.

Bur can any of you imagine that you are concerned for the good of your nation, and not divert its mifery by opposing those fins which do procure it? All care for the community is extinct when you do as good as fay, I will not be at the least pains or trouble to make them a holy and a happy people; I'll not cast in my mite to prevent their defilement or destruction: Such Gallio's are unnatural as well as unchristian.

> B 4 Pretend

VII. do something, at least you are able to complain against obstinate sinners; and if you can do no more towards saving the land, this will acquit you, and be accepted: whereas if you omit this little you can do, you would not advance reformation had you the greatest power; for that selfish, base, careless, cowardly spirit, would then restrain you from this good work as well as now.

I MIGHT have added the greatness of those benefits which reformation secures to a land, every one whereof makes thy neglect in promoting that reformation, a great instance of thy unconcernedness for

the publick. But I proceed,

4. If you neglect national reformation, you have not that true regard to your own bappiness, which rational self-love directs. Carnal felf-love deftroys mankind, but rational felf-love is that principle by which God governs this world, and on which he grafteth grace itself: This God owneth himself the author of, and never separates his service from our aim at our own happiness, but requires the pursuit of both these together. Nor indeed can we attain the one without the other; for if we truly glorify God in a way of fervice, we shall be happy; and if ever we be happy, it must be by serving him who is glorified in our happiness.

ITHINK

I THINK its needless to spend words to SERM. prove that you cannot serve God acceptation. bly, unless you love yourselves; nor that you love not yourselves if you disregard your own happiness. The thing most likely to be doubted by rational creatures, is, that you despise your own happiness, if you neglect national reformation; yet this you must be convinced of, when you lay to heart,

(1.) That you contract much guilt by your neglect to reprove and rebuke great sinners

in order to their reformation.

This is part of that divine law, which the fervants of God are obliged to keep: He hath fet this upon your consciences as part of your duty; Thou shalt not suffer fin Lev. xix. on thy brother, but thou shalt rebuke him. And we are injoined to reprove the unfruit- Eph.v. 113 ful works of darkness. Must not guilt lie on that man who lives in the stated omiffion hereof? Moreover, if thy grace be true, thou dost not only violate plain precepts, but guilt is aggravated, because thou offerest violence to the instincts of a regenerate nature; for that prompts thee to testify against fin from a divine antipathy, and excites thee to make men better from those holy propensions which render goodness amiable and delightful, wherever it may be found.

Guilt thus aggravated, attending the neglect of national reformation, where is

VII. contract it, and make himself partaker of other mens crimes by finful connivance? Or can a man of that character sit easy under this guilt from day to day? Is it a small thing to have God to charge you with a disregard to his interest; and to say concerning you, Here's one who professeth himself of my army, but will not strike a stroke for me: He prays, Thy mame be ballowed, but dares not contend with open blasphemers: Thy kingdom come, yet suffereth satan to empire it without controul: Thy will be done on earth as it is in beaven, and yet allows my laws to be

greffor.

GREAT rebukes from heaven may well be expected against such as this accusation belongs to; nor could you arraign God's justice, if you and your children should be given up to be insected with those abominations you will not reprove: Yea, must not you and your families expect a deep share in those miseries you refused to prevent? Nay, should God make the land happy upon its reformation by other instruments, may not you fear that neither you nor your families should be sharers in that blessedness?

openly trampled on, without fo much as a complaint against the most heinous trans-

(2.) You lose great benefits for yourselves and posterity, which endeavoured reformation

tion would entail. If defolation comes on SERM. this unreformed land, notwithstanding thy VII. lost labour, thou mayest hope to be marked Ez. ix. 41. for deliverance; for we see Noah, who Gen. vi. strove to reform the old world, saved from the common deluge with his family; and grieved Lot, with his children, escaped the slames of Sodom.

NEITHER will it be a light matter if fin should still abound, and judgments enfue, that these quieting thoughts will posfess thy mind: Could I have reformed and faved this people, I would have done it; my conscience bears me witness, that I, to my utmost, have endeavoured to put a stop to those impieties that procured these woes which now fo diffress my country. virtue should spring up, and wickedness hide the head, how happy wilt thou find thyself in having contributed thereto? Those tears which streamed at the view of hei-Ps. cxix. nous fins, will be turned into the truest 136. joy and gladness; gladness to see sabbaths fanctified, which used to be profaned; the name of God hallowed by a facred reverence, instead of oaths or blasphemy; and fobriety and temperance obtaining in the room of debauchery and excesses.

How will it revive thy years to fee the blessed effect of this change of things? when peace, prosperity, love, health, the success of the ministry, and a harmony among all sorts and degrees of men, shall jointly wit-

ness

VII. Thy own graces will improve by the good examples such a state of things affords, and those pourings out of the Spirit which it supposeth: Thou wilt be free from the dread of impending judgments, and instead thereof live in the chearful expectance of publick good: Nay, how comfortable will it be when thou diest, to behold an entail of helps to the holiness and happiness of thy posterity? These things may well convince us, that such as neglect national re-

formation, difregard their own happiness.

I THINK I need infift on no other mediums to prove that none keep the law who 4 contend not with the wicked, or which is the sense of that, None are the true servants of God who oppose not fin, and endeavour not the reformation of notorious finners. This you must allow to be beyond difpute, unless you can think him a faithful fervant of God, who hath no true zeal for God's honour, no real compassion or love to fouls, no due concern for the community, nor true regard to his own happiness, or to that of his posterity. It follows therefore that you must renounce that name, or engage yourselves in resisting sin, and promoting the reformation of others by all just means; and know, that your affuming that name unjustly, will no more avail you than if it were renounced; and if you are not the servants of God in reality, the privileges privileges of fuch belong not to you; nay, SERM. you are the flaves of the devil, and the fervants of the flesh; and, oh! how miserable will the portion of such be found at last?

I SHALL apply this truth, I. Particularly to the focieties for reformation.

2. MORE generally to all who hear me.

1. To fuch as are members of the focieties for reformation, or any way engaged in this great work. You deferve encouragement, nor may a word of advice be altogether needless. What I judge proper to you, will be comprehended under two heads.

(1.) Make light of the discouragements which attend the work of national reformation. What you have heard may vindicate you from reproach, and steel you against fears. Can that be called busy meddling, by which you approve yourselves the fervants of the living God, and fill up your places as fuch for God's glory, and a common good? Or should any call you severe, when you stop men from destroying themselves and nation? Can any wonder that reproachful lies pursue you in this enterprize? or be so imprudent as not allow for it when you thus disturb the kingdom of the devil, stem the tide of wickedness to which nature is so prone, and contend with a multitude who, by long custom, have become too licentious to scruple either what they say or do. Need you fear your opposers, SERM. opposers, when you see what their contest VII. is for, even vices reproved by the light of nature; and works the Lord Jesus came to destroy? And who they are that contend with you, even no other than the wicked, who make God their enemy by breaking his laws, who espouse the cause of satan against that of Christ, and when awakened will condemn their own follies, and approve of your restraints.

OUGHT you to despond as if too feeble to carry on this work, when you have Christ, and all men of true publick spirits, on your side; when your attempts are suftained by good laws; when you are blessed already with so considerable success; and the cause is God's, in whose power are the

hearts of all men?

DARE you be so impressed by discouragements, as to cease this divine work! when it is so noble in itself, so peculiarly the care of the Almighty, so certain of success at last, so glorious in its rewards, and your time so short to labour or suffer before you wear the crown? I join with my brethren in bidding you be of good courage,

and to depend on God's protection, which

Heb. xii. hath hitherto fo interposed, that as yet you

bave not resisted unto blood, striving against

sin.

(2.) Manage this reforming work as will most tend to its success. To this end, keep far from the evils you do rebuke in others; convince

convince, by good examples, fuch as you SERM. inforce by penalties; watch your temper VII. and words, that you give no cause of stumbling to those with whom you contend; let your contests be with men as wicked, and not from by-respects; let it be without partiality, with all whom you find obstinately wicked. Use prudence as well as conscience in all your undertakings; therefore never exceed the laws, neither accuse any whom you cannot fully convict. Make it appear to the criminal that it is fense of duty, and not a meddling temper; it is a defign of reforming finners, and not enmity, cruelty, or felfish ends, which encline you to get them punished. Finally, be humble, modest, and watchful; faithfully reform, to the utmost of your power, and back all your attempts with fervent prayer to God for his conduct, success, and bleffing.

2. I SHALL now address myself more generally to all who hear me, and contract the improvement of this truth to two

heads.

(1.) Love and readily submit to reforming Amos v. means. I wish too many are not guilty of hating him who reproveth, whereas such a man is your best friend, for he exposeth himself to pluck you as a brand out of the Jude 23. burning. He spends his time, and adventures your indignation, to keep you from destroying yourselves and others. Its great folly

SERM. folly to embrace the flatterer, who serves VII. his own turn, and to abhor a reformer, who is intent on your truest interest.

Jer. vii. 5. Be also willing to amend your ways and doings. Tremble lest you be in their number who hate and refuse to be reformed. How sad is it to be fond of your ugliest blemishes, and unwilling to be delivered from your mortal disease! Whatever mistaken conceits possess you, its your shame Phil. iii. you glory in; its self-ruin you are so resolved on; and your obstinate adherence to

your vicious courses, is no other than des-Prov. i.28. perate madness: the considerate do now esteem it so, and in a while it will be confessed such by yourselves. God is now es-

fessed such by yourselves. God is now esfaying your amendment, by exciting his servants to reprove and punish your villanies; for this you will be accountable as well as for all his other methods of conversion. Whilst he strives, there's hope of thy reclaiming; but know he numbers the days of his patience, and the means by which he would cleanse thee, and if thou still resist, he will give thee up to thy lusts, and soon destroy thee as incorrigible; Because I have purged thee, and thou wast

Ezek. Because I have purged thee, and thou wast \*xiv. 13. not purged, thou shalt not be purged any more from thy filthiness, until I have cau-

sed my fury to rest upon thee.

O H then that you would strive to obey all the ways whereby God instructs you! Engage your minds to serious consideration,

that

that so things may be represented in a true SERM. light, and with that preffing weight as to affect you suitably to their nature; then it may be expected that you will be willing to part with the abominations, which you dare not justify on a death-bed. I charge you, in the name of that God who is your owner, and will be your judge, that you love not what he abhors; that you venture not on what he fo plainly, feriously, and often forbids; and that you be not fuch fools as to make a mock at those sins which Prov. xiv. will render you infinitely more miserable 9. than all the punishments of God or man in this life can make you. In a word, blush that your lusts should ever be so loved, as to make you content to fuffer any thing upon their account; and now apply yourselves to Christ for liberty from that thraldom, wherein your vice restrains you; that fo the good laws of men may not be a terror, nor God an enemy.

2. Let your reformation extend beyond those sins the laws of the land take cognizance of. The law of God is the only adequate rule of reformation; whatever is a transgression of this, is sin, tho' human I John iii. laws should command it, or think it too 4 trivial to be forbidden. Therefore study God's law in the extent and spirituality of it, and frame your lives by no lower a rule. Watch against inward sins, which the eyes of man discern not, for God will Rom. ii. Vol. II.

SERM. judge the secrets of the heart, and eter-

VII. nally punish many civil persons for their www beart unbelief, malignity and impenitency. Amend also those outward faults of which magistrates take no notice; they restrain gross affronts to the divine being, and such things as difturb human focieties. But be you convinced that God's penal fanctions extend to whatever himself hath forbidden; and its at thy utmost peril if thou repent not of thy lies, thy neglect of God's worship in thy family and closet, thy covetous griping, thy concealed knaveries, thy levity and backfliding, thy waste of time, thy inordinate passions, and the like. My brethren! God will reprove all these as well as those crimes which the laws of the land do punish: therefore these must be conscientiously forsaken, as ever you desire a faving interest in God's covenant, or would avoid eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord.

TAKE therefore your measure from God's statute-book, (the bible) and not only from man's. Oh live! and be what that appoints, for God will vindicate his own authority, and be sincerely regarded in whatever he hath made to be the duty of his creatures.

Finally, BE not content to abstain from the fins forbidden by the divine law, but strive to obtain and exercise the opposite graces and virtues which it commandeth; for negative any person capable of obedience in what VII. the statutes of God enjoin as our endowment and employ: therefore let your habitual frame and constant exercise discover, that the assimple precepts do as effectually direct your temper and practice, as the negative precepts do restrain them: Learn Isa. i. 17. to do well as carefully as you cease to do evil. I shall conclude with a few motives to excite you both to reform yourselves, and to endeavour the reformation of others.

1. Remember your late troubles, and retain their voice. Can you forget what you fo lately felt, as the effect of your former fins? What poverty accompanied fuch as fled? what frights, losses, and anguish, posfessed them as staid behind! You felt much, and were in the highest danger of undergoing more. Oh! will you not reform those immoralities which provoked a merciful God to difarm you, and leave you naked in your enemies hands? Were their infults and threatnings fo agreeable, as to leave no impression? Had your dangers no voice because they are past? Know you not that it was owing to providential restraints, and not to your power, or the good-will of many of your foes, that you were not butchered, and your infants toffed on pikes as formerly? And can you be so stupid, as to think God called you not to reformation, when he exposed you to the brink

SERM. of ruin for former fins? or that your past calamities do not remain a lively caution VII. against perfishing in those fins? Must not you be infatuated, if you reassume the crimes you were so lately convinced of, and be horridly ungrateful, if you repeat them because your dangers are removed by his goodness whom you had provoked? He is profane who acknowledgeth not God's

Ifa. xxvii. design by all you felt or feared, was to take away your sin; therefore be so regardful of God, and so wise for yourselves, as to fay, After all that is come upon us for our Ezra ix.

evil deeds, &c. should we again break thy commandments, wouldst not thou be angry with us till thou hast consumed us; so that there should be no remnant, nor escaping? Refolve then, we will not commit those evils, nor fuffer others to repeat those abominations, against which God so plainly testified in the distresses we lately suffered.

2. CONSIDER the fignal deliverances God bath wrought, and the amazing prosperity to which you are so soon arrived. He is blind and base spirited, who owns not that Ireland was faved by the Lord. Review the xxxiii. 29. strength of the enemy, and disadvantages of your friends: Was it of man, that diftreffed, feeble, exposed Londonderry was preserved against so formidable an host? Or that fuch a multitude of well equipped foldiers were routed by a few undisciplin'd Enniskillen men? Was not God seen in the amazing

13, 14.

amazing retreat of those weak, ill provided, SERM. difeafed forces with duke Schomberg? Was it not the Lord's doing, that our king fell o not by that cannon ball which wounded his shoulder? and that he obtained a victory under fuch great disadvantages at the Boyn? Was it not our God that faved this city from being burnt by the enraged enemy, at his return? How near was all to be loft again at Athlone, if God had not infatuated the enemy to leave the works of that town undemolished, and so afford a defence for our forces that had passed the river, who must otherwise have been cut off by that far superior strength which the enemy had brought down upon them? Who can deny God the honour of guiding that bullet which cut off St. Ruth, when he was directing the guarding of that advantagious país, where our forces without a miracle must have been destroyed?

ALL must see the arm of God was made Isa. lii. 10. bare for your help; he dispirited, divided, and infatuated the enemy, and this apparently and often. And can you be so vile as to think God did all this that you might commit abominations? that you might return to your vomit? and commence a new

rebellion against himself?

MOREOVER, your fudden bealing is as fignally the Lord's doing as your very fafety: who could imagine you should in so few years be so fully peopled; your stocks

fc

SERM. fo increased; your houses built; your trade VII. revive; your rents advanced; the ordinances of God restored; and all things flourish so as to make you the objects of envy.

How can you perfift in provoking a God fo great, and finning against a God so merciful and kind? Hath he done all this to make you capable of offending him more, or to oblige you in gratitude to reform?

Rom ii. 4. Sure his goodness leads to repentance; therefore magistrates should resolve, and all as-

2 Chron. fift them to do as Josiah, who took away all xxxiv. 33. the abominations out of all the countries, and made all that were present to serve the Lord their God.

3. You may humbly and mournfully confess, there's much to be reformed, notwithstanding all the evil you have suffered, and the good you receive. God might well expect that a people fo fmitten and strangely faved, should be very peculiar in their walk, and devout in their inward frame. But alas, is it not far from this with many, with most! How much open prophaneness, (which the laws discountenance) doth still abound! Oaths may be heard, and drunkenness seen in your streets; the Strand and other places, witness how sabbaths are unfanctified: stupid is he that cannot wonder to behold such a return to sin, after such shakes, desolations, terrors and deliverances. Were provocations confined to the mockers at ferious religion, the aggravation were lefs:

less: But alas, many who profess strictness, SERM. and expect eternal happiness in God's ser- VII. vice, are corrupted, and forfake the law of our God; many fuch are drowned in the world, as if heaven had not room in your hearts; you match your children without regard to grace, as if you cared not tho' the devil had their fouls; you neglect God's worship in your families, as if you despised the curse that hangeth over such, Fer. x. 25. You are proud and vain, as if you would vye with the world in its fashion; you are extravagant, as if you had never wanted any thing, or were never in danger of lofing all: nay, as if this were not enough, hear some professors and church-members are grown fo loofe, as to frequent and plead for those nurseries and schools of wickedness, the play-houses, places the devil claimeth as his own, by his own account when he was dispossessed of one, he entred into there, faying, What had she to do on my ground; places the visible saints of all fects account scandalous, and ministers of all professions wrote against. What have many ascribed your debaucheries and ruin to, more than these? And can you encourage fuch by your presence, when your awakened consciences must tell you, at least on your fick beds, wretched I! that time was unredeemed which I spent there; oh that I could recal it! It was the gratifying my vitious vain heart which brought me C4 there,

SERM. there, and now I feel my guilt! There VII. are other more inward faults to be amended. which I must leave to your own consciences, as decays in grace, loss of your first love, formalities in duties; yet these are great faults, and will produce bitter fruits if

unreformed.

4. You are but upon trial in all that profperity you now enjoy, and far from being out of the reach of danger; you have no lease of it, that is not forfeitable, and God tries you how you will carry it, and speaks to delivered Ireland, as John v. 14. Sin no more, lest a worse thing do befal thee. God can strike again, your enemies are not dead, nor your defence impregnable; former fins which you may commit may bring your former woes: Say not prophanely as they, Isa. ix. 9, 10. lest he fay, as ver. 11. How cafily can God scatter you again, if you fin again! how foon can God take away the life of the king, upon whom fo much depends of your fafety! Your unreformedness after such methods looks like a fad prefage, that God's fword will yet be drawn, and that he hath not made an end of fmiting, when you feem refolved to begin to fin afresh; know that God's jealous eye is upon you, to observe whether after all that's past over you, you amend or not.

5. If God be forced by your growing worse to renew his controversy, your calamities

ties will be heavier than what you have yet SERM. endured, if not your utter ruin. Your fins VH. will be aggravated hereafter by the fore judgments you have felt, the loud warnings you have met with, the strange deliverances you have found, and the means and mercies you now enjoy; and be fure these aggravations will be found in the weight of those strokes whereby God will testify against them, Isa. lxiii. 9, 10. God's rebukes do rife still higher, Amos iv. Bethink you then how oft God had fmitten and faved Ireland; and how defolate he hath made the churches of France, Hungary, Bobemia, Alfatia, and the Palatinate: they were oft finitten, oft delivered, and at last are laid utterly waste; and do we hold our mercies by a firmer charter than they did? Have we past under less methods of amendment than they? Hath God waited longer on them than you? Is God's honour more concerned in our ruin than in theirs? Will not your fins cry as loud in God's ears? Are not the men God employ'd to correct them, the popish enemies to God's cause as well as ours? And were there not fome faithful, godly, praying protestants in those places as well as among us? Oh then, what can allay your fears, or uphold your hopes, that you, the protestants of Ireland, may think to fin on and prosper, or at most be but gently smitten still? Flatter not yourselves when you see God is managing

VII. ter desolations; it's a time of jealousy, therefore awake: Reformation must be your safe-guard, or you delude yourselves, and will but dream yourselves out of the Gospel, the plenty and the peace you do now enjoy. You will find that a resolution to provoke God more, will end in such plagues as will devour your mercies, and embitter the remembrance of them; when God shall lay you waste with his judgments, and pursue you with his wrath wherever

OH that these things, which ought to persuade, may by the blessing of God, force and fix such resolves as these! I will by the grace of Christ faithfully search what needs amendment, and reform to the utmost of my conviction, whatever I find amiss in myself and family; that so we may not forfeit our present enjoyments, and bring utter woe upon ourselves and others. Yea, I will contend with the wicked, and do my utmost to restrain their sins, that at least they may not cry so loud as to make the

nation desolate.

you fly.

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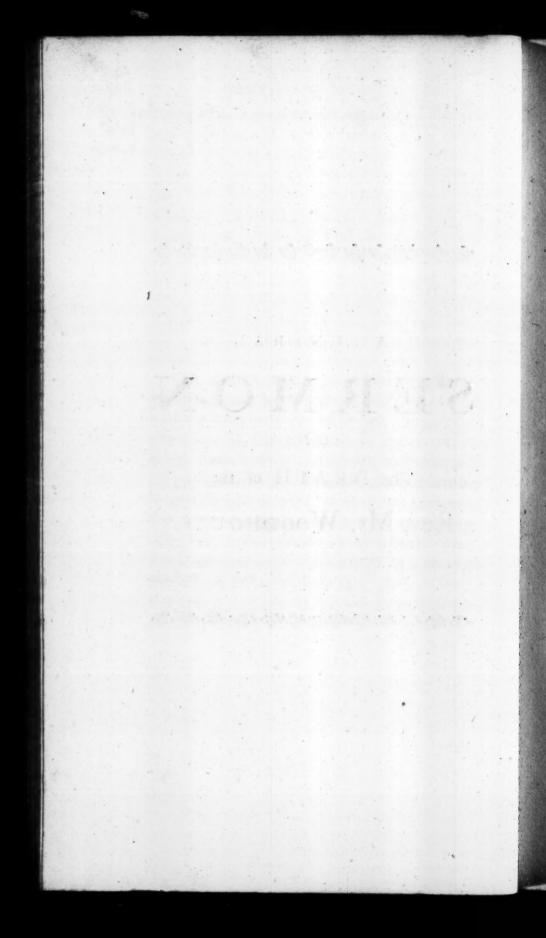
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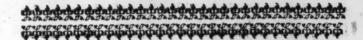
# SERMON

ON

The DEATH of the Rev. Mr. Woodhouse.







#### TO

The CONGREGATION at Little St. Helens, lately attending the ministry of the Reverend Mr. Woodhouse.

Everal indispositions, with some backwardness to publish this sermon, made it late before I could attempt an answer to your request. In transcribing it, I found a

necessity of enlarging on those heads in the former part, which were but named in your hearing. There the subject is something obscure, yet seeing the scriptures only, were capable of giving any certain account of the na ure of prophesy; I less repine, that I am confined to my bible, by circumstances which deny access to my other books, to search the conjectures of Jewish or Christian writers.

There's a paragraph likewise added to the character of your late worthy pastor, viz. Some instances of divine mercy to him in his life and death; which I would not have mistaken, as if I thought the want of, yea, or the evils contrary to most of those, were

were any way inconsistent with the true felicity of a faithful minister. No, no: He is happy notwithstanding hardships, whom God guideth here with his counsel, and afterwards brings to glory. Nevertheles such privileges ought to be regarded, because bowever fovereignty may exert itself in with-holding these from some; yet those servants of Christ who enjoy them, seem fitted to use them without a snare; and not so capable of designed service in the want of them. Yea, all must thence conclude, we serve a master as able to supply us with the blesfings of a present state, as with those of a future; and therefore it's from the contrivances of wisdom ever join'd with goodness, that any useful minister shall want them.

You have a great stock to account for, whom God entrusted with two such ministers; the death of both should be entertain'd as a solemn warning, to apply yourselves to give a comfortable account by due improvements. That this as well as the former discourse may greatly contribute thereto, shall

be the prayer of,

Your Servant in the Gospel,

Daniel Williams.



## ZECHARIAH i. 5.

And the prophets, do they live for ever?

T'S usual with the facred wri- SERM. ters, in cases which are plain, VIII. to conclude a point by interrogations; that so we might be more affectingly convinced,

when an appeal is thus made to the common sense of mankind, that it cannot be otherwise. My text is among the instances of this kind, Do the prophets live for ever? q.d. It's most plain and certain they do not live for ever; it's manifest to every man, that the prophets of former ages are among the dead, and those of the present are sure to follow into the same state. You of this congregation will not easily suspect a truth, so sadly attested by the death of one and another saithful dispensers of the Gospel among you. Nor can I without sorrow find

SERM. find myself preaching the funeral sermons VIII. of both of them, in so short a span; but fubmission to divine providence is as well our interest as our duty, and when the improvement of the most severe is possible and required: I have for that end fixed on this subject, as the plain language of these sudden breaches.

Obs. The prophets do not live for ever, but die as other men.

I shall consider,

I. THE persons spoken of: viz. pro-

phets.

II. WHAT'S predicated concerning them: They do not live for ever, but die as other men.

## SECT. I.

I. The persons spoken of are prophets: A prophet is a title of such trust and honour, that Christ himself bears this character, which you see in those words, But Moses truly said unto the fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, &c. And it shall come to pass, that every soul that heareth not this prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Persons in this office are reputed of that necessity and use to the world, that king Joash bewails a dying prophet in these words;

Acts iii. 22, 23. My father, my father, the chartots of Ifrael, SERM. and the horsemen thereof. From their pecu- VIII. liar intimacy with God, they are called with men of God. And undoubtedly they are kiii. 14. his instruments in effecting his most gra- 1 Sam. ii. cious purpofes towards mankind: For by 27. them he makes known himself, and reveals his will and counsel, in what concerneth their eternal happiness, as well as temporal.

THESE are the persons whose mission God folemnly and oft avoucheth, and whose message he is most concerned to stand by and execute. For the fafety of their persons he is so solicitous, Do my prophets Psalm cv. no barm; they who receive them are fure of 15. a reward. Yea, so jealous is God on their Mat.x.41. behalf, that the arm of a king shall wither, if he stretch out a hand against them; and I Kings very children are devoured by bears for but xiii. 4. fcoffing at them.

Bur left you should on the one hand think I shall assume too much, in applying to Gospel-ministers, any thing spoken of the prophets; or, on the other hand be misled to ascribe too much to us, if we are included in that character: I shall let you fee, that two forts of persons are designed

by the name of prophets.

I. Some are prophets in the more eminent sense, viz. Such persons as are extraordinarily called, and inspired, for the im-VOL. II. mediate

25.

SERM. mediate revelation of God's will, or future VIII. events.

2. Some are prophets in a less eminent fense; viz. Such as are called in a more ordinary manner, and by the more common gifts and affistances of the Spirit, in conjunction with their own study; and explain and apply the truths published and revealed before, Of this fort are the ordinary ministers of the Gospel, tho' those immediate revelations are not pretended by them, as were common to the other fort of prophets.

I shall speak of each of these.

I. THE prophets in a more eminent sense, were persons called in an extraordinary manner, and inspired for the more immediate revelation of God's will, or of future events. These indeed are most commonly defigned by the word prophets. They were not confined to one family or tribe, as the Aaronical priesthood was: They were not fuch by education, preparation or acquirements of their own; tho' fometimes God was pleased to inspire some z Kings ii. of those societies, called, The sons of the

prophets. If you ask, why these are termed the sons of the prophets? I answer, because they did altogether apply themselves to the duties of religion, and devout exercifes under the conduct of some great acknowledg'd prophet, as Samuel, Elijab, Elisha, &c. but you ought not to think

that all of them became prophets; and SERM. much less, that their guides could at their VIII. own will, derive to them a spirit of prophecy by their preparatory education; however that might tend to remove sundry impediments to that office. This subject requires to be enlarged on, beyond what a part of a sermon can admit; yet I give a few hints.

(1.) God revealed his will to these prophets in a more immediate manner, than to ordinary ministers: I say more immediately than to us, because it was so, even when God made use of the ministry of angels to declare his mind. Indeed, this way of revelation cannot be called so immediate, as when the matter was internally suggested by the Holy Ghost to the prophet's mind; or when God himself formed words, externally conveyed to the ear of the prophet, as 1 Sam. iii. 11. or figures placed before his eyes.

NEVERTHELESS a message by angels may be called immediate, if compared with the common way of God's discovering his mind to us; as when the angel bid Zechariah, Cry thou, saying, thus saith the Zech. i. Lord of hosts, I am jealous, &c. You will 14, 16. find several receive some of their prophecies in this manner; as Daniel, St. John, Dan. x. &c. In such cases, the angel is, at least, &c. as properly to be called the prophet; as the man who received the discovery from him.

On

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SERM. On which account it may be, that the VIII. angel spake to St. John, I am thy fellow fervant, and of thy brethren the prophets.

But the more immediate revelation was, when the Spirit himself represented objectively to the prophets, what they were to deliver as the will of God; which as much obliged the faith, and obedience of such they were sent to, as if God had immediately spoken to them, what he so uttered by these as his mouth. And David's account of the matter is clear. The Stirit of

2 Sam. count of the matter is clear; The Spirit of xxiii. 20. the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The same is signified as to

Eph. iii. 5. others by fuch words as these, It's revealed by his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

Lukei.70. And as he spake by the mouth of the holy pro-Actsiii.21. phets. And what God hath spoken by the mouths of all his prophets. What obedience was due to the words of these you may easily inser, when they are declared to be

Ezraix. the very commandments of God, which he commanded by his fervants the prophets; and disobedience is confessed to be a sin, charged and punished as such.

(2.) The manner of this more immediate revelation was different. Sometimes by dreams and visions: God came to Abraham

Gen. xx. in a dream, God said to him in a dream.

3.5: The Psalmist in like manner informs us,
Ps. lxxxix. Thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and
19: saidst, &c. The same Ezekiel, Isaiah,
Daniel, and most of the prophets found

frequently.

frequently. Several prophecies are called SERM. visions, as the vision of Nahum and of Oba- VIII. diab. Oft there was no difference between revelations by dreams, and by visions; viz. when the vision befel them in their sleep, and when figures were prefented to them in their dreams. Things thus occurring, the words are used promiscuously, and signify but the same thing even when both the words are used: So as Job xxxiii. 15. In a dream, in a vision of the night. Daniel speaks to Nebuchadnezzar, Thy dream and Dan. ii. 28. the visions of thy head. In the same manner speaking of himself, Daniel had a Dan vii. 1. dream, and visions of his head. But sometimes there were visions seen when the perfon was awake; and as the others are called visions of the night, and night visions; so Dan.ii.19. these appeared when it was day, and the Dan.vii.7. prophet free from fleep. Such Daniel mentions at the river Hiddekil; I lift up mine Dan. x. 4 eye and looked, and behold a man clothed in linnen, &c. yet this vision struck him on his face, and put him into a fleep, v. 9. but raised him up, v. 10. The like vision had Samuel when awake, which is called a 1 Sam. iii. vision; tho' he only heard the word of the 10, 15. Lord by a voice, and faw not any fimilitude. Nay, the word [vifion] is oft used for internal inspiration, as well as for emblematical refemblances; so the vision of Isaiab, Ifa. i. 1?

D 3 YET

YET however extensively the word [vi-SERM. VIII. fion is applied, there is an inspiration whereby God oft revealed his will to the prophets, wherein there were not those impreffive images, appearances and voices, which more commonly attended visions taken in the strictest sense, and did greatly affect the bodies and animal spirits of such as had these visions.

> By this inspiration I mean, the holy spirit suggesting inwardly and in a still manner, the truths he moved the prophets to make known, and deliver in the name of God. With respect to this it's often said, the word of the Lord came to men; as to Jeremiah, Jonah, Samuel, Elisha, &c.

Jer. i. 4. Jon. i. I. I Sam. v. 10. 2 Kings xvii. 3:

Yet mistake me not, as if inspirations were confined to this more still manner of revelation: For there was as real, and proper an infpiration by dreams and vifions, as in this; and the Spirit of the Lord is faid to fall upon them, and his word to come unto them by each of these; as you may Ezek. i. 3, fee by Ezekiel and many others. Yea, and

All scripture is given by inspiration, as well 4, 5, & cap. xi. 5. as fome: Yea, it's extended to all true prophets; as St. Peter instructs us, The pro-2Pet.i.21. phefy in old time came not by the will of man,

but boly men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoft. Moreover, as to the defigned effect, they all came to the same thing; if you respect such revelations as had a common regard, especially in what

concerns

concerns any part of the rule of faith or SERM. manners: For by each, the Spirit fignified VIII. the matter intended to be revealed, in fuch a manner, as the prophet was enabled, infallibly and truly to deliver the very mind of God, as it was represented to himself, whether it was in dream, vision, or in a more fedate inspiration. His imagination received and retained it, according as it was impressed, whether the matter was fignified more plainly or more obscurely: I fay more obscurely, because the prophets did not always understand the meaning of their own prophefies; but were forced to ask help for the explication of them. This is acknowledg'd by them, as when I Da- Dan ville niel had seen the vision, and sought for the 25. meaning; then behold there flood before me, as the appearance of a man, who explained the vision. But whether the prophet understood it or no, and however the word of 2Pet.i.19. prophecy was given, it was fure.

(3.) REVELATION, as used in scripture, must be distinguished into that which was proper to the prophets as such; and that which is common to them with other good

men.

1. REVELATION proper to the prophets as such, is when the Spirit of God represents to the mind, or impresses on the imagination, the thing to be revealed. (1.) Without any intervening act of man's invention or judgment. (2.) It carried in it,

18.

15.

SERM. the obligation and force of an original rule VIII. and standard. (3.) It was not to be in any thing changed, or altered by the prophet's confideration, or by comparing of it with any other rule. (4.) In fundry cases, the prophet's understanding might be no further improved, or enlightned by that revelation, than the understanding of such as perused it, after it was published by him. (5.) It had not always a fanctifying efficacy on the understanding, or will of the prophet, to whom it was given; as you fee in Bealam, &c.

> 2. REVELATION is often mentioned in a fense common to the holy prophets with other good men. This lies in the illumination of the mind by the Spirit, to discern spiritually, and more fully, those objects that were before prophetically revealed. This the apostle prays that all the Ephe-

Eph. i.17, fians might be partakers of: That the Father of glory may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, for the knowledge of him; the eye of your understanding being enlightned, that ye may know the hope of your calling, &c. In this fort of revelation, (1.) There was room for, yea, need of, diligent fearch, meditation, and exercise of judgment. This is not only enjoined Tima-Tim. iv. thy, Meditate on these things, give up thyself

wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all; but it was practifed by the prophets, and that as to their own prophecies:

cies: Of which falvation the prophets have SERM. enquired and searched diligently, when it VIII. testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, Pet. i.10, and the glory that should follow; unto whom 11, 12. it was revealed that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things that are now reported unto you. (2.) This revelation hath not the form of an original rule or standard, and must not only be compared with, but regulated by what was before prophetically revealed; nor is it to be obeyed, nor doth it oblige otherwise, than by its conformity to the law of nature, or fuch prophetick inspirations, as were given to be a rule and standard: To Ifa. viii. the law and to the testimony; if they speak 20. not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. (3.) This is capable of additional improvement and advances of light, and the object to be prefented in juster and more adequate thoughts, as it is more extensively, and in higher degrees represented and conceived of. (4.) The understanding of a good man, by this fort of revelation, is enlightned beyond what the recital of his own thoughts, when most illuminated thereby, will necessarily make his mind to be, to whom they are related. Yea, farther, by this fort perfons may better understand a published prophetick revelation, than the prophet to whom it was manifested at first. Therefore David prays, Pfal. cxix. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold the 18. wondrous

SERM. wondrous things out of the law. And he VIII. meditated in God's precepts, and thereby became wifer than his teachers. (5.) They Pfal. cxix. who have this revelation, find the fanctify ing efficacy of the truth revealed; they know it affectingly and operatively. the matter receives its evidencing proofs from the authority of a prophetick revelation of the Spirit recorded in the word, yet it becomes spiritually perceived, and favingly efficacious, by this enlightning and renewing operation of the Holy Ghost, who fills that truth with power.

I hope these short hints will guard you against the mistakes of the Quakers on the one hand, who make the rule of faith and life in the scriptures to be imperfect, and to stand in need of additions; and on the other hand, against those profane men who despise, as well as deny, the visitations of the Holy Spirit, as if he could not concur with our rational faculties in their operations, by his illuminating light and fanctifying efficacy. And indeed both the Quakers notion, and that of these men, do reduce all revelation to that which is prophetick, whereby the canon was framed; and, in the mean time, exclude this spiritual manifestation of those canonical truths, whereby they are made effectual to fanctify and fave us, and which we have reason to covet as most necessary for us, fince the scripture canon is compleated.

3. THE

tended with such self-evidencing light and VIII. power, as gave the prophets a satisfying conviction, that they were truly from God, and no delusion. It's undoubted, that God can give men an assurance, past all suspicion, that it is he who speaks, and is the immediate author of those notices which he gives them. He can satisfy them that there is no possibility of delusion as to what is suggested; yea, and that in such a manner, as to exclude (as too low) those rational proofs of, and enquiries concerning them, which are requisite in ordinary cases.

THE evidence was so great, that disobeying what was commanded, or refusing to go upon any enjoined message, or concealing any thing they were required to publish, was very finful; the the prophet had no other notice besides this revelation to oblige him; as we see in Moses, Jonah,

&c.

Moreover, we find the prophets diftrusted not their revelations, even tho' the thing revealed was often strange or improbable, or far transcending former discoveries, or dangerous to their own lives, yea, or seemingly unlawful, as against plain precepts. Of each of these instances might be given. Of the last you have that command to Abraham, for offering up his son Isaac; for his consent whereto, he was so rewarded, SERM. rewarded, as well as applauded; Gen. xxiii-

VIII. 2, 16, 17.

Bur to describe the way whereby God affured the prophets, that it was he who appeared, and spake to them by dreams, visions, or more filent inspiration; and how this affurance became fuch, as to fet them beyond jealoufy and danger of delufion, must be dark to any who never felt it, or at least somewhat like it in the extraordinary approaches of God to his own foul. Whether it was by some objective, sensible glory, accompanying the revelation, or by the peculiar power of that afflatus which moved them, or by the ftrongly impressed effect of the thing revealed upon the foul, yea, and body too; or by a powerful affent of the mind, wrought and excited by the virtue of the Spirit, in fuch near approaches of his unto the prophet, called, his coming upon him: Whether it was fometimes by one, or the other, or by all conjunctly in some cases, or by any other way, it's difficult to determine, and not very needful to enquire.

2 Chron. XX. 14.

4. THE matter thus revealed to the pro-

phets was of fundry forts.

THEY were eminently called prophets, from their foreseeing and foretelling things to come: to enable them hereto, is the Ifa. xlvi. prerogative of God, by whom the end is declared from the beginning. But there are other things as proper to their office, and

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at least of as great importance in their na- SERM. ture, as well as usefulness to man, and sub- VIII. serviency to God's government over him, as predictions of suture things can be. For to them was revealed the nature and perfections of God, especially with respect to what the light of nature did imperfectly, uncertainly, or not at all discover; as the Trinity, the reconcileableness of his offended majesty to man, and not fallen angels, &c.

To them did God make known the perfon and offices of Christ the mediator, the covenant of redemption, the way of the falvation of finners: To them God revealed the conditions of pardon and peace, the true nature of those conditions, and the certain connexion between those conditions and those benefits: To them God revealed the means of our deriving grace, and the manner and nature of the Spirit's operations; as also the privileges of saints, the promises to the church, the glorious condition of the bleffed in beaven, and the folemnities of the judgment-day, the refurrection of the dead, the power and miseries of devils, and the undone and diffreffed state of impenitent finners in hell. Nor must we exclude the account given of our depravedness by the fall, nor a more certain account of moral duties, and man's true happiness, than the darkned light of nature yields; and much less any positive duties and institutions. In short, the articles VIII. and the things that most affect our fear and hope, do chiefly depend on the revelations

given to these inspired persons.

THE imperfect, wild, false, and uncertain notions, the wisest philosophers had of the least obscure of such things, as moral duties, and man's true happiness; and their utter ignorance of most, may assure us the sublimest matters were beyond humane invention: Nor can we imagine, that any thing below revelation could afford that certainty or obligation, as the nature and consequence of the great things of salvation do require.

THEREFORE, how ungrateful to God, and cruel are they to themselves, who despise the benefit we have by those inspired persons whom God employed to make known what is of so near concernment to us, and we could not otherwise be ac-

quainted with!

You see I meddle not with special mefsages, or warnings upon particular occasions to this or that man or place; and much less, with what may concern one's self in the way of comfort, warning, or reproof, by personal application of some established truth, or direction as to dangers or events (something whereof may still continue.) But my point refers to predictions of the general state of the church; and more especially to such revelations as SERM. the rule of faith and duty is fixed by. VIII.

immediate revelation of God's will by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, for the use of the church, are to be esteemed in a rank at least equal with the prophets. Under this head I include the evangelists, who recorded the acts and sayings of our Lord Jesus; tho' I insist chiesly on what

concerns the apostles.

I know the apostles are distinguished from the prophets of their time: Some 1 Cor. xii. apostles, some prophets. But that is because 28. in that place, by prophets, are mostly defigned foretellers of future things; whereas revelations of doctrinal articles and rules for practice, were chiefly granted to the apostles. Apostles are likewise distinguish- 2 Pet. iii. ed from those former prophets, by whose 2. revelations the way of falvation was made known to the world; but there the ground of distinction lies in that additional part of their office to that of prophets, viz. their being witnesses of Christ's resurrection. But that doth not exclude them from being prophets, for they were persons by whom God spake to men, as his own mouth, I Thess. iv. 15. Upon them the church was built: You are built on the foundation Eph.ii.20. of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. Their doctrine was to be received as revealed to them.

VIII. tho', when they appealed to former recorded revelations, for the conversion of Jewish
unbelievers, the Bereans justly examined
the scriptures; yet in many things their
revelations were an original rule, and obliged to credit and compliance, without any
other attestation than their testimony that
it was of God: This, I say, was sufficient
after their mission was proved.

AND it will appear, if you consider how many duties we are under by God's commandment, received only from them, which commands are of equal obligation with those 2 Pet. iii. of the prophets: That you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the

apostles of our Lord and Saviour.

THEY changed the Jewish oeconomy, worship, and officers, and put an end to facrifices and circumcision, which, with the like, were the appointments of God, and therefore could not be altered but by himself. They erected church-officers, prescribed several parts of worship and rules of discipline. Now if these are not the laws of God, it's no fin to transgress or neglect them: if they be his laws, then the Holy Ghost spake by these apostles; and what articles he delivered by them, must be believed as from men prophetically inspired,

SHOULD

SHOULD any fay, They had not prophe- SERM. tick revelations, but as men of grace and VIII. judgment, they inferred, under common affiftances from reason, or former revelations, whatever they declared or appointed; I answer, Many of these things were contrary to the former institutions of Moses, and other inspired persons; and the apoftle Paul distinguisheth what he so inferred, from what he delivers by revelation as the infallible will of God; I speak this 1 Cor. vii. by permission, and not of commandment. 6, 10, 12, Unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord; but to the rest speak I, not the Lord, &c. Now concerning virgins I have Eph. iii. no commandment, yet I give my judgment, 4,5. &c. Finally, What was unknown to former ages, was revealed unto holy apostles and prophets by the Holy Spirit.

6. WHEN men were obliged to receive from the prophets their revelations as the word or will of God, he sufficiently attested their office, and that they were in-

spired and sent by him.

WE see, when God gave laws, and settled his worship in Israel by Moses, many miracles were performed by him, and such visible appearances of God among them, as could not but convince that God spake those things by Moses. Moreover, tho' we do not read that miracles attended every prophet, who was only employed to apply those truths which had been before attest-Vol. II. E SERM. ed; yet either by the truth of his predic-VIII. tions, some peculiar power attending him, the testimony of established prophets, or other signs of his mission, they were convinced of his call, before he was esteemed

a prophet of the Lord.

In times of great revolt, God was pleafed to grant fometimes the power of working miracles, altho' the prophets made no change in worship, nor afforded any further light in points of doctrine; but principally were employed to reprove apostasy from those rules of worship and practice, which were before revealed. This we find when Elijah, Elisha, and several others, were sent to testify against revolting Israel.

WHEN the Jewish oeconomy was to be diffolved, a gospel constitution to be erected, feveral articles of faith to be affented to, and Christ to be received as the Messias and teacher of the church; then many miracles were performed by Christ and his apostles, as God's attestation to their misfion, and to the things revealed by them, And tho' we fee not fuch miracles in our days, yet we have no reason for our incredulity, because the truth and rules we are enjoined to entertain, were fully and openly established and recorded, and due means used for transmitting the same with the evidencing miracles of that time to us of this age; and this beyond the certainty of any other history, yea, and supported

by the accomplishment of scripture pro-SERM. phesies, yea, those of the most improbable VIII. fort; and the continued efficacy of those truths upon the hearts of the most prejudiced, and that without human force,

yea, and in the face of opposition.

7. WHATEVER, in the facred scriptures, is revealed by the holy prophets or apoftles, in the name of God, as his revelation, we ought to receive as the will and truths of God, infallibly recorded and transmitted to us. All scripture is given by in- 2 Tim. iii. Spiration of God, and is profitable, &c. A- 16. mong the scriptures St. Peter includes the 2 Pet. iii. writings of St. Paul. Its true of all as of 16. David, He spake by the Holy Ghost; i. e. Mark xii. by his unerring direction: Nay, as if the 37. Spirit had defigned to obviate some late objections, we find, in another place, That Acts i. r6. the scriptures might be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost spake by the mouth of David. Which notes that the Spirit of God made use of David, as his mouth, to utter his own mind; and as his hand, by which he wrote his own will; for it is a written pfalm to which he refers. Thus faith the Lord, is often prefixed to what the prophet declared, which are terms too great for any inferences made by a fallible light; nor can any acquit themselves from being impostors, when they use this phrase, if uncertain as to the matter, and conscious that God was not the author.

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I MUST

SERM. I MUST a little enlarge on the several

VIII. parts included in this particular.

(1.) THAT the persons speaking or writing, were the *inspired* prophets of God at that time; which I offer, because the speeches of other persons in the bible, are not the infallible will of God, unless they are approved as such, by the inspired penmen, or some other acknowledged prophet.

I ADD, that at that time they were prophets, because some were employed upon an occasional message, and others more statedly entrusted with divine revelations; of this last fort were Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, Nathan, and sundry others in the old testament; and all the apostles, except Judas, in the new testament. Of the former, among others, was the old prophet near Bethel; he was of old a prophet, in delivering some particular message; but not fo statedly employed, as that his pretenfions deserved credit with the other prophet, against the former revelation to himself, altho' a vision from God was pleaded by him. For when the Spirit of the Lord went from any, a regard to their words as prophetical was to ceafe.

(2.) THAT the prophets mention it as the revealed mind of God, and in his name. This I suggest, because where they express only their private sentiments, without pretending to a revelation, or to declare it as from God, that must not be believed as the

infallible

1 Kings xiii. 25.

infallible testimony of God, but is to be SERM. examined by the common rules of truth. VIII. Nathan highly approves David's purpose to build a house for God, and by his private judgment encourageth him thereto: Go, do all that is in thine heart, for the 2 Sam. vii. Lord is with thee. He, without a revela-3---18. tion, thought fo good a defign as that, in the hand of one fo favoured by God as David was, could fail neither of acceptance nor fuccess. Thus he proposed his private fentiments, as fuch, without pretending an immediate message from God, or the use of such words, as, Thus saith the Lord: Whereas, upon the ensuing vifion, he contradicts his private judgment, and, in the name of the Lord, forbids the defign he approved before; whereto David fubmits, from a sense of the very different authority of this, from what the prophet had formerly declared; for now the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying, Go, and tell my servant David, thus saith the Lord, shalt thou build me a house, &c. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, did Nathan speak to David. Then went King David and sate before the Lord, &c. The apostle Paul (as already 1 Cor. vii. instanced) plainly distinguisheth between 25. what he uttered in the name of God as an apostle, and what he inferred to be truth, in a manner common to other faints, by the ordinary affiftances of the Spirit upon E 3 ferious

VII. persons could easily judge between their own reasonings, and immediate revelations; so their piety, as they were saints, and the blessed Spirit, as they were his instruments, must lead them to signify that difference to others, whenever there was a danger of mistake.

(3.) THE will of God is infallibly recorded in the scriptures, by such as were em-

ployed to transmit the same to us.

THE great defign of revelations, was to instruct and oblige other persons besides him who was inspired; therefore that which was revealed, must be justly reprefented, or men must be imposed on, and at utter uncertainty, whenever the matter of the revelation was declared to them. But, besides this mistake in the guide of our faith, and rule of our duty, which we are subject to where the will of God is misrepresented, its further to be considered, that if the Holy Ghost did not so influence the penmen as to prevent error, our faith would be altogether a human faith, as to whatever the penman, thus left to himfelf, recorded. The reason whereof is this; a divine faith must terminate on a divine testimony, which because such is infallible, and is resolved into this, the truth of God declares it. But if you do not suppose, at least, the conduct of the Spirit, whereby the penman shall declare infallibly.

bly the will of God, his declaration will SERM. be fallible, because himself is so; and the VIII. ground of credibility is safely resolved into what be is, if you allow him to be under unerring assistance, which nothing below what's divine can be.

I AM sensible there are two doubts, which deserve a larger discourse than my time will allow for the discussing of.

1. The integrity and veracity of the penmen of the new testament, suffice to assure us of the truth of what they write, tho' they had no immediate revelations; and therefore such revelations were needless.

Answ. I GRANT, that in recital of such matters of fact as themselves beheld, their veracity is sufficient to induce our affent to the truth of such things: Nevertheless it appears necessary,

(1.) THAT if the belief of those matters of fact be a condition of life, and the disbelief thereof be damning, those persons, in relating those things, must be under such a character, as may assure us that God will not suffer them to misrecite what is of such consequence to be believed, and danger if distrusted.

(2.) WHEN they deliver articles of faith, not so expresly revealed before, or require duties uncommanded till then, or give notice of further privileges than the church was before acquainted with; in such cases

E 4 a divine

SERM. a divine revelation is necessary, and their VIII. veracity is of no further avail, than as they witness that God revealed such things to them. And indeed what more in those cases do they witness, than that they receive fuch things from God, and were moved by his Spirit to publish them? Nor is the mere integrity of the persons, of greater use to induce our belief therein, than as it assures us, they durst not affirm God declared fuch things to them, if no fuch thing had been declared by him. But still, their office and employ by divine command, with promise of his affistance in their transmitting his will to us, doth give a higher affurance of the certainty of what they deliver, than their personal integrity will afford. Yea, be this never fo great, their testimony is but buman, and therefore an infufficient ground to specify our faith as divine; or to render it congruous, that our belief should be faving, or unbelief destructive, without a divine attestation. This point is decided, if St.

Paul were either fincerely honest, or in-<sup>2</sup>Tim. iii. spired, when he tells us, All scripture is given by inspiration from God, &c.

2d Doubt. THE words of scripture need not be indited by the Holy Ghost, althor the revelation of the matter expressed be granted.

Answ. 1. UNLESS the words which are made use of, do truly and fully signify what

what the Spirit would have recorded, his SERM. revelations are mifrepresented to men; and VIII. the danger of this, if the choice of words had always been left to the mere skill of every penman, is too apparent to need more than I have already spoken on that head.

Answ. 2. WHEN the Holy Spirit suggested truths to the mind of an inspired person, those truths might as easily be signified by words indited by the Spirit, as by words invented by the inspired. For instance, when the Spirit informed St. John of the future state of the church, could not the Spirit excite and direct his mind, to conceive the revelation under determined words, and enable his memory to retain the matter under those very words, as well as under any words of his own inventing. And yet this will not hinder the Spirit's accommodating himself to the instruments he is pleased to employ; for he declares his mind by words directed by himself, according to the various endowments and style of such whom he makes use of; yea, and ferveth great purposes by that variety. If he defign to speak of plain things, or to men who can better understand, and be more affected with more vulgar words, he inspires such as Amos, and excites and guides his imagination to conceive of, and utter, what is revealed, in terms familiar to himself. In like manner, he chuseth such as Isaiab the VIII. lime, and for the advantage of fuch to whom a loftier way of expression is more

agreeable.

Answ. 3. In fundry cases it was necesfary, that the very words by which the will of God is expressed, be dictated by the Holy Spirit. For instance, when the prophets understood not the meaning of what they heard and wrote, it was dangerous (if poffible) to declare the thing truly, unless they confined themselves to words indited by the Holy Ghost. So in sublime matters, the notice whereof is entirely depending on revelation, and where great stress lies on a word, and the least variation is dangerous, as in some articles of faith, and descriptions of the terms of life, &c. in fuch cases, the Holy Ghost would not leave it to man's invention to form words, upon which the faith of his church, and the rule of judgment, fo entirely depended. He who chargeth his angels with folly, would not place fuch trust in fallen man, in matters for which he is so insufficient, as he is in the forecited cases; whatever their fitness might be to record matters of fact, or fuch plain matters as the duties made evident by the light of nature; or which, by former revelations, become univerfally received and understood.

Answ. 4. It can scarce be doubted, that the very words recorded in many parts of the

the scriptures, were indited by the Holy SERM. VIII.

WE find several passages called, The words of the Lord, and this when they are recited after they had been spoken, and written, by the prophets. And Baruch Jer. xxxvi. wrote, from the mouth of Jeremiah, all the 4words of the Lord, which he had spoken unto him. Of prophefies, when written, the Holy Spirit faith, Until the words of Rev. xvii. God be fulfilled. Can any doubt whether 17. the ten commandments, written by Moses, were the very words which he received from God? Nor is it unufual for God to enjoin the prophets to write the words which he gave them; as to Daniel, Write Dan. x. 9. these words. The same to Jeremiah, Write Jer. xxx. thee all the words that I have spoken to thee 2, 4. in a book, &c. And these are the words the Lord spake, &c. In like manner, God gives a charge to St. John, He faid to me, Rev. xxi. Write, for these words are true and faith-5. ful. Need I add, how often is the Holy Spirit faid to speak to, and by, his servants in the recorded words.

MANY other confiderations might be offered, but those persons who think to solve some difficulties in the historical account of several things in the scriptures, by denying the words to be dictated by the Spirit, I hope, may yet esteem what is already proposed, sufficient to prove, that many of the very words of scripture were indited

VIII. cannot safely be otherwise, in proposing the great articles of faith, or terms of salvation, or promises of saving benefits; especially where such things are called the words of the Lord, or connected with such phrases, as, Thus saith the Lord, Thus spake the Holy Ghost, The word of the Lord came to such a prophet; or such an apostle spake thus, By the will of God, and the like. Having thus far taken notice of these two doubts about the sacred books of the inspired writers, I proceed to the last thing included in the seventh proposition.

(4.) THE divine revelations thus transmitted to us in the scriptures, we ought to receive as the infallible will and truths of

God.

This needs no proof; for to refuse it, is only to proclaim our own ignorance, impotency, injustice, infidelity, evil disposition, and perverseness, not to receive things of this moment as fet in that light, evidence, and authority proper to them, argues a difregard of our own welfare, and is no other than to shut our eyes that we may post to hell securely, and come short of falvation without a fense of our loss. Nevertheless this evil is too common, and it appears by the lukewarm regard we have to these heavenly oracles, and their weak effects upon the temper and lives of most men. We all lose the great benefit of the fcriptures, fcriptures, as far as we neglect to acknow-ledge their divine original, and overlook the impress of God upon them; but did we behold them as the true revelations of God, words himself spake, as surely as if we had heard him; did we consider them ensorced by such expressions as these, Thus saith the Lord, This spake the Holy Ghost, This God hath declared to us by his Son, or by his chosen witnesses: Oh! what power would we feel in every truth, to direct our judgment, affect our hearts, and govern our wills and practice?

WERE they thus received, we should firmly assent to those revealed doctrines, which seem least reconcileable with our reason, and realize, by faith, what's more remote from our senses; for he hath appointed them, who knows all things, and cannot lie.

How chearfully and firmly should we expect the performance of the richest promises, and accomplishment of the greatest prophecies, when the almighty God of truth hath thus solemnly and certainly engaged himself, by his own mouth, to sulfil them! With what humble reverence should we search the things we yet apprehend not, when we look at them as beams of light, darting immediately from unerring wisdom! Every precept must command subjection, when entertained as the charge of him, who

SERM. who is our great ruler, judge, and a jea-VIII. lous inspecter of our hearts and ways.

ALL the threatnings would strike an awe upon the stoutest heart, when clearly apprehended as pronounced by the mouth of a just ruler, who is a consuming fire, and able to execute the severest fanctions of his law.

What concernedness would possess our trisling minds, when truths are considered by us with conviction; that the excellent Majesty of heaven and earth, is thereby informing, pleading, warning, and directing us his creatures, designed for an endless state of happiness or misery. Neither would such a view be useless to encline our hearts to love those truths, for the sake of this great God, who thus condescends to guide, plead, importune, and persuade such inconsiderable, guilty, carnal, obstinate, earthly, vain, incredulous apossess.

OH! how would our prejudices, excuses, delays, and carnal disputings be silenced and overcome, if we never thought of scripture discoveries, but as the infallible will and truths of the living God. Things most fully attested, most true, and that shall hereafter be acknowledged by all of us, to be true and most important. Thus they are apprehended wherever they are savingly effectual, 1 Thess. ii. 13. When ye received the word of God which ye heard of

but as it is in deed the word of God; which VIII. effectually also worketh in you that believe. And to the degree they are thus received by us, we shall find their efficacy.

## SECT. II.

II. HAVING finished what I judged necessary to be spoken, concerning prophets in the first and more eminent sense; I proceed to such as are called prophets, tho' in a lower sense than the former; viz. the ordinary ministers of the Gospel, who by divine institution, statedly preach to men in the name of Christ; by duly explaining and applying the scriptures and law of nature, under the affistances of the Holy Spirit, and his blessing on their studies.

THOSE parts of their office which refer to facraments, discipline, &c. are more remote from my purpose than what I have mentioned.

THAT these ministers are not excluded from the name of prophets, is thus evinced. The whole body of true Gospel ministers during the reign of Antichrist, are called prophets; They have shed the blood of Rev. xvi. saints and prophets, i. e. of the godly members and ministers of the church, who opposed the man of sin; and it's most probable they are designed by those words, And they shall send gifts to one another, because

SERM. cause those two prophets tormented those that VIII. dwelt on the earth; which torment was by their doctrine, called, A fire which proceeded out of their mouth. The ministration of the Gospel by them is termed prophesy-

Ver. 16. ing; That it rain not in the days of their prophesy. Nor can the reason given for Judas and Silas being mentioned as prophets, argue that they were other than Acts xv. Gospel ministers; And Judas and Silas being prophets also themselves, exhorted the

Gospel ministers; And Judas and Silas being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them. Their publick ministerial exhortation, (which is the work of common ministers) is justified by, and ascribed to their being prophets. And the apostle's words can scarce allow preaching the Gospel not to be meant by prophesying: He that tra-

Cor. vii. to be meant by prophefying; He that pro-3, 4, 39. phesieth speaketh unto men, to edistication, and exhortation, and comfort.

> OF the prophets of this kind, viz. Gofpel ministers, I shall briefly remark three

things.

1. As these do not since the finishing of the scripture canon, need the eminent prophetick inspiration, or immediate objective revelation; so they ought to manage themselves as men who pretend not thereto.

THEY must use prayer, and study, and rational helps to search the scriptures, to understand what is revealed in the word; and not depend on, nor pretend to immediate teachings: Thus Timothy was advised

by the apostle Paul. And they who as-Serm. sume more, do too often either falsly deny VIII. their pre-meditations, or profane the Gospel by their confused impertinencies and nonsense. Moreover, the Gospel preachers must humbly depend on the assistance and blessing of the Holy Ghost, as men subject to error and mistake; yea, as such, they ought patiently to suffer their hearers to examine their doctrinal assertions, without expecting their assertions, without expecting their assertions, further than their assertions are proved by scripture, or the light of reason.

NEITHER may they without the brand of usurpation, invent new doctrines or duties; coin new terms of communion of saints, nor rules for, or parts of divine worship; nor yet charge that to be sin, which neighbor the scriptures nor light of nature for

bid.

No other reason for these limitations need be urged, than that these things are peculiar to the eminently inspired prophets; and can be warranted only by such immediate revelations, as constituted the divine rule of faith and practice; which rule must be violated by such additions, and the transgressor becomes thereby exposed to that dreadful curse, If any man shall add unto Rev. xxii. these things, God shall add unto him the 18. plagues that are written in this book.

To aspire at immediate revelations in ministerial work, without designing such Vol. II. F changes

SERM. changes and additions to the divine effa-VIII. blished rule, is extreamly vain; and to make these changes and additions without pretending to fuch revelations, is the groffest usurpation. Happy church! if humility had always prevented both the extreams.

> 2. MINISTERS must be qualified with ministerial gifts, and called to this office.

THEIR employment cannot be difcharged without fuitable gifts: Can they 2 Tim. ii. teach what they understand not? How will they divide the word, who are not able to distinguish truth from error? How will they confute gainfayers, who will be baffled in defending fundamental truths? Will they declare the whole counsel of God, who need to be catechis'd in the plainest doctrines? Are they apt to teach, who have not learned the first principles of the oracles of God, and are as bad at perfuading as instructing? Such men can never be a bleffing to the church, who neither edify others in knowledge, nor establish them in the true faith, nor use apt means to promote their holiness

> THE scrupulous are fure to waver and be tormented, while their doubts must be resolved by men so unskilful; and to be misled in difficulties, when solved by cafuists of this kind. People may be pleased with their noise and seeming affection, until by some better helps, they grow judicious enough to nauseate them; or by learning

their

24. Tit. i. 9.

their nonsense, become confident enough SERM. to ascend the pulpit, as well as they. VIII.

By fuch unqualified preachers the worfhip of God becomes contemptible, the fouls of men endangered; able ministers of unequal lungs deserted, for putting men to some pains to learn; the veneration due to the office, and necessary to its good effects, converted into profane distain; and the peace and order of God's house unavoidably broken and overturned.

THEY must be ignorant of satan's devices, if they mean well, who serve such bad purposes; and the worst of men, if they intend these, or other base designs. Such ambassadors dishonour our Blessed Lord, by their incapacity to deliver his message; and while they still continue ignorant, have no reason to plead that Christ did chuse illiterate tradesmen to be apostles; for tho' he found them such, they became eminently accomplished. But neither these men, nor their predecessors, are approved by such a miracle; nor have they ground to expect such a reward for their presumption.

Our Bleffed Lord intended no fuch unfit persons for gifts to his church; and the office pretended to by such is a nullity, tho' the most conceited church elect them, or fifty bishops should ordain them.

Bur will gifts, much less a conceit of them, suffice to constitute a minister? No:

F 2

SERM. for, How shall they preach, except they be VIII. fent? A call is requisite, tho' not in that extraordinary way, peculiar to the first Rom. x. 4. prophets. Christ hath taken more care of his name and church, than that felf-conceit, or the opinion of the ignorant should be the judge of mens fitness; or that perfons out of the facred office should invest men in it. It's enough, that the people judge what minister is most like to edify them; it's too much for them to determine, who is fit to be a minister, or to convey the office, which, by divine ap-

14.

I Tim. iv. pointment, is to be by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. The welfare of the church is provided for, by confining it to this body, in bar both to fuch who are less fit to judge of qualifications, and more careless of the honour of the ministry; as alto fuch, who form a depending disparity, by pretence of an higher office, than Christ discriminates from presbyters, by either power, honour, work, or name.

> IT's true, an inclinable devotedness, with gospel defigns and fincere piety, give fatisfaction of God's call to the minister himself, but I mention only what falls under the decision of others; heartily wishing, that neither ambition, mere concern for a livelihood, or discontentment with their own station, pass not with many for an inward call; especially with such, who

refuse

refuse a trial by impartial, able ministers, SERM. from a sense of their own unfitness. VIII.

I HAVE been larger on this head, from a conviction that it must prove well or ill with the church of Christ; as the pulpit is guarded, and ministers are qualified.

3. These prophets or gospel ministers are greatly intrusted, privileged, and en-

couraged by our Lord Jesus.

They are *stewards* in God's house, they Tit. i. 7. watch for souls, and are rulers of Christ's flock, they are ambassadors for Christ, his Heb. xiii. special presence is with them, the Holy Spi- 7, 17, 24 rit breaths in, and works by their ministry; 19. they dispense to men the truest blessings, Matthew and treat of the highest matters. Whatever xxviii. 20. they duly threaten, promise, censure or Mat. xvi. seal, Christ ratisses in heaven, and in due 19. time will fully execute.

They are entitled to bonour, and credi- 1 Tim. v. table maintenance. Christ is concerned for 17. 1 Cor. ix. them, and in the treatment they meet with, 14. holding them in his right hand. They Rev.i. 16. have opportunity to posses the higher de- Dan.xii.3 grees of glory. That blessed heaven will make amends for the contempt, sufferings, self-denial and reproach, to all which they are more exposed than others. Nor will the greatness of their account or labour, which require more than ordinary solicitousness be repined at, if they are adjudged

faithful.

SERM. I HAVE finished the first point, viz, VIII. The subject or prophets, including gospel-ministers: It remains I speak of what in my text is said concerning them.

II. These prophets do not live for ever; i. e. They do not always abide on this earth, but their fouls are separated from their bodies; they are dissolved and removed from this present state by death, as well as others. Not only the false prophets die, but the true, who pleaded God's cause, and stood in his secret. If any might be exempted, it's these; of whose number were the only two that were translated, viz. Enoch and Elias, whose groffer parts were refined, and fouls purified to a meetness for the life, fights and employs of the beavenly regions. This was a change equal to what they, who are found alive at the coming of Christ do undergo; and no low privilege to them, not only as it made the whole person sooner happy, but as it was less awful, and averse to nature, than separation by death, and the rottenness of the grave; and therefore feems defired by the apostle Paul, who expresset a regret at the common death in his greatest longings for

be unclothed, but clothed upon.

But the sovereign exception of these two, shall not violate the common rule: Others, tho' prophets, must die. Aged

Samuel

Samuel lives not always. You fee they SERM. die, yea, all forts of them expire and de- VIII. part. The grave receives the royal prophet David, and the eloquent prophet Haiah, as well as the herdsman Amos. Moses was in many things privileged above all other prophets, and his prayer fecured the lives of thousands, yet could not he delay his own death till he entered Canaan. the Baptist, tho' greater than a prophet, lives not for ever. In this I'm fure Peter hath no priority above others. The apostle John, tho' by a mistake of Christ's words, John xxi. reported to be immortal, and lived fo long 23. that his co-ævals might be fixed in that conceit, yet he is overcome by death at last. St. Paul, tho' carried up to heaven while alive, must yet return and come down to die.

WHERE'S our publick-spirited Dr. Annesly, our penetrating Mr. Baxter, our polite and upright Dr. Bates? Among the dead we have lodged them. And now we are recording, that the useful Mr. Woodhouse is dead, is dead; yea, in a short uncertain time, it will be true of me, and the rest of my brethren, they are also dead.

IT may feem needless to prove what's writ with the sun-beams, and experienced every day; yet I shall inforce it by two things.

1. THE prophets are fure to die, upon reasons common to them with other men.

F 4

THESE

SERM. THESE are of the same brittle make VIII. with others: Frail earthen veffels they be, notwithstanding the treasure they contain; 2 Cor. iv. dust weakly cemented; their life is breath Rev. ii. 1. foon stopp'd a thousand ways; angels by Ezek. ii. 3. office, but far from these in constitution; and God minds Exekiel, amidst his seraphick visions, that he was still a fon of man.

However endowed or renewed they Heb. ix. are still among the all, against whom a fentence of death is past, they have fin attending them, which is the cause of death, and frequent harbingers of its approach; they are subject to accidents common to the most exposed. This earth, fince the curse, can no more be a paradise to them, than to others; they need that purgation by death, which shall confume the root of fin: Nor will God always keep them from their home and rest. Oh! vain man, that cannot realize a thing fo fure as death; and earthly man, that cannot get above an inordinate love of life.

> 2. THEY are fure to die, from fome reasons more peculiar to themselves than to others.

> SEDENTARINESS much exposeth them to diseases, intense exercise of mind wastes their spirits; whoever escape, the rage of persecutors takes hold of them: They are under disquietness of spirit, and filled with disturbing thoughts, by growing errors, divisions,

divisions, reproaches, and resistance of fin- SERM.
Ners.
VIII.

THEIR hearts are daily pierced by the unpersuadable obstinateness of their hearers, scandals of their people, and the death of useful instruments; and often are they eaten up by zeal for the house of God, and grief at the declension of Christ's interest in the world, as well as pressed down

by their cares and labours.

It's not feldom that the fins of the people kill their ministers, commonly, as they forfeit their lives by unprofitableness, and sometimes (tho' scarce ever in this age) by too great an esteem of them. Their great labours also make rest the more necessary; and should these outlive a capacity for service, not only would their former repute and performances be eclipsed, but there are few in such danger to expose the sacred ordinances to contempt, and to dishonour religion so much as they. If we restect on all these things, we may better wonder, that ministers live so long, than that they die so soon, as well as certainly.

## APPLICATION.

THE former part affords scope for many practical inferences, but this being a Funeral discourse, I shall confine myself to the last part, viz. The mortal, dying state of ministers. Sirs, We shall die as certainly as any of you, our breath is in

VIII. our labours and opportunities of service.

It is not long before you and we must part, and your eyes see us no more in a present state. Surely this cannot be so empty a subject as to afford no instruction; it's not so faint a matter as to excite no practical thoughts either in you or us. Are so many prophets dead, are we all within a step of death, and must not the living lay it to beart? Living ministers and living people too?

## SECT. III.

I SHALL therefore apply myself in sundry exhortations,

1. To ministers.

2. To our bearers in general.

3. To you of this congregation in parti-

Exhort. 1. To ministers. And this shall be, (1.) With respect to successors. (2.) To your people. (3.) To yourselves.

Exhort. 1. To ministers of the gospel.

This text speaks aloud to you, God gives warning that your end will come. Oh! how happy were it that all our labours and behaviour did express a lively sense, and constant becoming impressions of it! Did we perform and contrive all with death in our eye, right and great ends would be still designed; and care, vigour,

vigour, and folicitousness, would be exci- SERM. ted for effecting those ends. You shall VIII. certainly die, and that soon, and, for ought you know, suddenly: Oh! then manage

yourselves accordingly,

(1.) With respect to successors in your work. Be concerned to raise up and improve fuch, as may fill up your places when you are removed. Aged Paul cultivated young Timothy, and he took care of a succession; For this cause I left thee Titus i. 5. in Crete, &c. to ordain elders in every city. As you would not fuffer the interest of Christ to die with you, nor let the following age be destitute of helps to their falvation, be folicitous that fuch helps be provided, who may propagate religion, and defend the truth, when your service is at That selfishness were devilish, which would be pleased to have posterity mourn over you, as the last ministers employed to fave finners.

To avoid all suspicion of this, I beseech you, persuade youth of parts and probity, to fit themselves for gospel-work; yield them all assistance to enter upon it when qualified (yet with care to lay hands so Tim. v. suddenly on none, who may endanger the church by errors, ignorance, or scandal) impart to such hopeful instructed persons, the effects of your experience, by warning them against snares, directing them in their studies, fortifying them against all assaults

they

VIII. acquainted minds with advice, how they may prove most universal, successful, and fignificant blessings in their generations.

As an instance of your sincere desire to have the work of Christ prosper when you are dead, look to your spirits, that you who are aged envy not the younger ministers, but chearfully encourage them as the hopes of the rising ages. Youth affords them some advantages beyond those of your declining years; be truly pleased therewith, as far as they contribute to greater service; if their gifts exceed yours, rejoice in all such presages, that religion will flourish when you can no longer serve it.

It's as much your duty to delight in, and promote the usefulness and acceptation of young ministers, as it's their duty to bonour you for transmitting the gospel to them, by your labours and sufferings, when they were incapable of yielding any advantage.

tage to it.

If they despise you, they consider not that you spent your vigorous youth in faithful service; nor that they will find decays and uneasinesses when they grow aged. On the other hand, for you to envy and discourage them, would argue not only a forgetfulness of the encouragements you expected, and the allowances you needed, in your younger years; but also discover.

discover, that in your old age, you are SERM. concerned for your own credit, more than VIII. for the cause of Christ, or the welfare of the church.

(2.) With respect to the people. Carry it in all things to them, as persons you must shortly leave. Do for them, and contribute to their eternal welfare what you can, without delay. St. Peter was still careful to improve the churches, from a sense of his own dying state; and to fix those truths in them, which might be prositable after his decease: I think it meet, as 2 Pet. i. long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you 13,14,15. up by putting you in remembrance, &c. Knowing that shortly I must put off this tabernacle.

If you with-hold reproof from offenders, you may die before you have an opportunity to apply it; and so they perish in their fins, without possibility of being awakened, or reformed, in your days. Therefore rebuke and warn them, in the first season which is offered; for as suture time hath its own work, so you are not sure of that time to repair your present omissions. Be in constant travail to get Christ formed in dead sinners, and pursue this as men who consider, that if you are long unsuccessful, you shall never prevail with them.

WHEN you purpose to benefit any soul, engage therein with such thoughts: Here

SERM. is one I cannot many years be useful to, if VIII. he long wander, I shall not recover him; what help I can give for his establishment or comfort, he must foon improve, or remain as he is. It will be vain on a deathbed, to lament over the state of any neglected foul, let his misery be never so great or dangerous; when you might have done them good, then you would not, will be a

very bitter reflection.

HAVE you not pity enough for fouls that you pretend to love? then look what a distressed state you are like to leave them in, and ask yourselves, Am I content to depart while they are flaves to the devil, enemies to Christ, and self-destroyers? Look among your hearers, confider your own families, and examine the cafe of your friends. And do none offer themselves to your view, whose case needs to be greatly alter'd; fome ignorant, fome fecure, or backslidden; others weak in grace, or under finking doubts, unstable and erroneous; the condition of each presseth hard for relief? Can you endure to think of entring into eternity, before those are instructed and converted, and the others more improved, comforted, and established? If you cannot be willing to this, attempt their amendment presently, that you may have a hand in their relief, and the comfort of beholding a change in their state before you die.

IP you have been too unconcerned, how SERM. matters stand with people for another world, VIII. bewail your difregard, and be more affected ~ with, and folicitous about, their happiness; for indifferency ill becomes dying ministers, in what concerneth the falvation of dving fouls. St. Paul judg'd the benefit of the Philippians worth a suspence of his entrance into glory, tho' affured of it; yea, Phil. i. 24. could even wish himself accursed from Christ, to have his kinsmen saved. And is Rom. ix the worth of a foul abated in our days, and 3. the falvation thereof fo leffen'd in value. that we can be fo unconcerned where kindness is professed, and duty doth oblige? Shew your own belief of unfeen things. by fuddenly helping all those to final safety, whose welfare you defire.

(3.) With respect to yourselves, both as

to your trust and personal state.

As qualified young men should not needlessly delay entring into the ministry, beeause time for service may be shorter than they imagine; so they, who are engaged in this work, ought to govern themselves,

as tender, mortal persons.

I SHALL not infift on fuch rules of mere prudence as these: Neglect not your bealth so as either to hasten your end, or to indispose you for service before you are removed; the former will imbitter death, and the latter will make life grievous as far as you are accessary thereto. Neither

SERM. be so careless of your families, as by waste VIII. or improvidence to expose them to beggary; for you should consider their substitution generally depends on your lives, which are frail and short; and you, of all men, should not seem worse than insidels, in not providing for them. Nor yet should your affairs be unsettled, if you have any thing to dispose of by will; for ministers, who must not live always, may die as suddenly as other men. But my design is to exhort you to what refers to your discharge of your trust, and securing the state of your own souls, and both under a lively

1. Be diligent and vigorous in your place,

as knowing you will die foon.

prospect of your approaching end.

TRIFLE not in your study, if you would acquire a considerable stock of knowledge; waste not time, or else despair of being great proficients, and eminently sitted for your work. Such as are young, have the season of laying up a stock to spend, when the employs and hurries of a greater age will much divert them; and the eldest have such room for improvement, that no hour should be idly spent, nor any means be slightly applied to.

2 Tim. ii.

I wish none were workmen who need be ashamed; yet such will they continue always, who squander time, and are as remiss in the means of profit, as if they were sure to live for ever. But they who are mini-

fters

sters have a great trust committed to them, SERM. even the souls of many persons, and the VIII. interest of Christ in their day and place. You have hard work, and therefore be earnest and resolved; you have much work, therefore be industrious and diligent; and that you may neglect neither the one or other, always meditate that the season of working is fixed, and of short duration. Our Lord gives us an example; I must John ix. work while it is day, for the night cometh, 4 wherein no man can work. He would neglect no minute of the day, tho' he could do much in a little time.

You may outlive your liberty, you may outlive your health and abilities for fervice; but be affured, death must put a full stop to all your opportunities of labour: What Eccles. ix. thy band findeth to do, do it with all thy 10. might; for there is no working, nor device, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou art going. A view of an unfeen world would excite all the powers of our fouls; and can we refuse to look into that, when we are so near it, or coldly plead with finners, while heaven and hell are prefent and plain to our eyes? We deal in matters of the highest nature, even things divine and eternal; we treat of things of the greatest consequence, no less than the everlasting life and death of fouls; we purfue defigns which are most difficult to be effected, opening the eyes of the blind, raising the dead, pull-VOL, II, ing-

SERM. ing down fatan's kingdom, erecting the VIII. throne of Christ, and all this against a deenerate nature, a mighty and unwearied tempter, and a world full of diversions and How then can we loiter or be remiss? Without affiduity and a fervent spirit, our business appears to be mistaken, and hope of success is very ungrounded. Past unsuccessfulness might convince us with what difficulty, and how flowly our work doth prosper: What fruit then can you reckon on, if you trifle away the few remaining fands, or be remiss and indiffe-

rent in your performances?

2. Be faithful in your office, as men sure to give an account, and that e're long.

IT's a strict account we are to give for others, as well as for ourselves; and the event will be extraordinary, be it reward or vengeance. Tremble therefore at the Ezek. iii. least suspicion, that God will then require the blood of any lost finner at your hand. He will be found the wifest minister, who can fay with Paul, I am pure from the blood of all men. But this it is impossible to be, if you spare due reproof for fear of offending some kind benefactor. When you avoid a close, searching, importunate ministry, to please the secure, you destroy yourselves and them. If you pluck not finners as brands out of the burning, you will stand guilty of their remaining miserable; and your not compelling them to come in, will

Acts xx. 26.

be imputed to you, as if you had kept SERM. them out. Take heed that you speak not VIII. peace to such, upon whom destruction is coming: every wound you slightly heal, will prove your own hurt.

A CONNIVANCE at any fault, filence under dangerous symptoms, a neglect of subjects that would more edify, and superficialness in applying proper truths, will be charged on you, as downright treachery to souls, perfidiousness to Christ, and

perjury against your ordination vow.

AND the same accusation will lie against you, if you misapply or neglect churchcensures; yea, or if you connive at growing errors, or fuffer any truth of Christ to be trampled on by your base cowardice; or comply with finful impositions, or defert your work, or knowingly quit the interests of a Redeemer in any point: It is I Cor. iv. required of stewards that a man be faith-2. ful. You are appointed by Christ stewards in his church, and very shortly you will hear that awakening peal, Give an account of thy stewardship. How nearly doth it concern you to carry it so in all respects, that you may be approved faithful by that judge, who is acquainted with all your hearts and ways? You are warned, Take Col. iv. 17. beed to thy ministry that thou hast received of the Lord, that thou fulfil it. Let no part be neglected at any time; and in all your administrations approve yourselves to G 2 God,

SERM. God, and to your own consciences; if VIII. these condemn you as false and deceitful, the flattering yourselves, and being applanded by others, will avail you nothing. Seek not to please men to their hurt, but benefit them to their displeasure; the last will hereafter bless you, when the first shall curse you. Let it be manifest, that you have both heartily accepted Christ's allotted work, and are well contented with Christ's promised affistances and rewards; and that therefore your fidelity influenced the little time you had to fpend; if fo, be fure your acceptance shall be published, and your reward proportioned to your faithful endeavours, and not to your fuc-

3. Live not to selfish purposes, nor be in chace of base designs, which must fill you

with blushes in so few years.

cess or esteem with men.

Phil. ii.

WE are fallen into an age, wherein every one feeks his own things, and no man (i. e. few) the things of Christ; a temper ill becoming any man, because it's against human society; it agrees far less with a christian, because he is bought by, and self-dedicated to, the Lord Jesus. But it's most abominable in a minister, not only as his dedication and vow are solemnly renewed, but as it is a direct profanation of, and contradiction to, the whole of his sacred office. Here's an ambassador who chiefly runs on his own errand, to the neglect

lect of the message our king sends him on. Serm. Behold a steward of Christ's house, but VIII. mostly solicitous and employ'd about his own little affairs; a watchman who seldom looks beyond his own cottage. Christ hath invested him with honour and power for publick service, and these he prostitutes to the service of a carnal turn.

OH! bethink you, have I no greater things to mind, and furer things to purfue than vain-glory, man-pleafing, or perishing riches? Shall the honour of Christ, and the fouls of men, be postponed, or a pretence of ferving these, be made use of to fuch fervile purposes? Is it not an abomination to Christ, when he beholds me neglecting his work for these; or accommodating my labour in his work, to the obtaining of these? Hath Christ called, qualified, entrusted; and privileged me as a minister, to drive on this selfish trade, and make all facred things a stepping-block to my own advancement? This is worse than primitive simony, for it's a felling the holiest things for money or applause. But while you drive fuch bargains, do you think how short a while you shall enjoy the benefit of them, and how little they will fignify to your happiness in another world?

BE so wise, as not to suffer the noise of thy petty projects, to stop thy ears against the cry of sinking souls, or the claim which the church's interest hath to be pre-

G 3 ferr'd;

SERM. ferr'd; and know, that what the publick VIII. fuffers by thy private traffick, will make thee at last a far greater loser, than all thy gettings can countervail.

4. Believe and obey the gospel which you dispense, as those whose estate after death

depends thereon, as much as others.

A BELIEF of the gospel is not only necessary to make you warm, earnest, and diligent in your preaching to others, but it is necessary to the salvation of your own fouls; for remember, an affent which is unavailable to thy penitent return to God, and fincere acceptance of an entire Saviour, can no more fave, than a mere trust or persuasion, exclusive of those. Therefore be earnest for a share in covenantmercy, and be folicitous to clear thy title thereto, by the grace to which it's promised. It were strange blindness to think, thou can'ft get to heaven by an easier way than the common people, when the rule of thy judgment is in some respects more strict. And it's strange cruelty to thyself, to be earnest for the falvation of others, and neglect thy own. St. Paul exerciseth so much rational self-love, as to prevent his own dam-

left ix nation, as carefully as that of others: I
keep my body under, left when I have
preached to others, I myself should be a
cast away. Yea, it's part of his meaning,
that his preaching to others would aggrayate his misery, if he prov'd a reprobate.

Nor

Nor can it be less, if we consider that all SERM. the warnings and pleadings we used to VIII. others, will testify against our unpersuadableness. Every mark of grace we propofed to others, must reproach us, that it was not used in the examining ourselves; and each direction we give others, will witness against us for not observing them. What matter will confcience find for gnawing torments, when it reflects, that we lived in the fins we so often declared the evil and danger of? We were careless, when we still minded others to be diligent; we omitted the duties we fo frequently perfuaded others to perform; those very snares and dangers we warned others to avoid, we fecurely fell into ourselves; we took up with the very hopes, which we foretold others would prove false and vain; and at last perished, notwithstanding we had preached those truths by which others were convinced, regenerated, and made to perfevere unto falvation.

WHAT folly can be so unaccountable, as to commend beaven so highly, and yet to miss of it by sloth, or for a base idol; to set forth bell as so terrible, and yet to fall into it for the love of a brutish or devilish lust; to offer Christ so importunately to thy neighbours, as so needful, useful, amiable, and sufficient, and yet to refuse him thyself, as of no use or value.

It's very fad we should be found to G 4 have

SERM. have studied the gospel only for a liveli-VIII. hood in this world, and never confidered and applied it as a means of eternal life in a future world. Surely infidelity must be the cause, that we should take up with this earth, as a reward for helping others to heaven: Or, do we vainly dream, that ministers shall have a state of trial after they are dead, that we dare end our prefent life fo unprovided for happiness, and marked for destruction, by that very rule we affure the world all others shall be judged by?

But I beseech you to be serious and intent, to fave yourselves as well as those that hear you; apply the edge of truths to your own fouls: When you beg grace for others, forget not yourselves; and remember your own concern in that way of

falvation you teach your hearers.

5. Be patient and resolved under all your hardships, as knowing you shall be delivered from them, and possessed of eter-

By this argument the former fervants of

nal glory.

Christ composed their minds under their heavy fufferings, and recovered fresh vigor of spirit for their work, when almost sunk 2 Cor. iv. with labour: For which cause we faint not; but the our outward man perish, our inward man is renewed day by day: For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us an eternal weight of glory.

16, 17.

glory. Heavy work, and oppressing fer- SERM. vice, were but for a moment, tho' as long VIII. as they hoped to live; and also soon to be exchanged into a glory, which should always last, and far outweigh their pressures. A fhort life, and that which is eternal, makes a great difference in the good that any man enjoys, and in the evil that he fuffers; but when the good is great, and eternally to be enjoy'd, in the room of momentary hardships, we have good reason chearfully to undergo our forest afflictions, and reassume our hardest work. Therefore filence your complaints, and relieve your weariness by this thought, The evening of this irksome day is near, a full period to all that feems irksome will presently be set, and then will commence the morning of that pleasant felicitating day, which can never end; a day wherein our labours will be fully rewarded, and our tribulation not be remembred, except with joy that we were called to bear them.

2. I shall apply this to such as are our hearers in general. You who attend our administrations, and frequent those assemblies wherein ministers spend themselves, have much duty to learn from this subject: But I shall confine myself to four exhortations.

(1.) Improve by us, as by men whose breath will soon be stopped. Get all the good

SERM. good by us that's possible, and that with-VIII. out delay; for if you long abide unconverted, we must leave you so; if you much longer continue weaklings in grace and comfort, we shall be capable of yielding no further helps for your edification, let

BE intent to profit in knowledge and holiness, for our days are number'd; and when that period comes, you can no longer have us to admonish you of your faults, warn you of your danger, direct you to your duties, persuade you to obedience, or

your need and our defires be never fo great.

folve your doubts.

Oh! then make not our death-bed uneasy, or your own case desperate, by giving us bitter reslections, that we leave you slaves to satan, and the world, and the slesh, after all we have done, or hereaster can do, to reclaim you; you are not sure of more probable helps, at least you may be certain the profit you get by us, must be soon or never. And for your further excitement, consider,

1. WHEN we die, we shall give an account of our pains and success with you. It will be your loss to give in our complaints against you; I lest them as barren and unpersuable as I found them: but that crown is yours if we have succeeded; Heb. xiii.

17. You shall be happy, and we shall with joy declare, they received and savingly

felt the truth.

tho' we be dead: No fermon will be for-VIII. gotten, all will be reviewed; you must account for all our pains and pleadings, our warnings, directions and counsels; They Ezek. ii. Shall know there was a prophet among them. 5. Our words shall not fall to the ground as quite lost, My word shall not return in Isa. Iv. vain; and know, that as the prophetick word died not with the prophet, so its effects will be of the highest nature; viz. salvation or condemnation to you. It should startle you to think, that as short as our lives be, we are to you a savour of life or death.

(2.) ADMIT and bear with our faithfulness and plainness: You cannot expect, that we who are on the borders of eternity, dare trifle to please your vain fancy, or flatter to gratify your humour; or daub and palliate

to avoid your displeasure.

Were we to live always here, we might be more easily tempted to consult your pleasure in what we say; but when we consider, that both you and we are hastening into a world of spirits, we must venture to prosit you, tho' it should displease; and be useful to your souls and true to our own, tho' your kindness should be abated for it. In another world you would curse us, and we condemn ourselves, if by flattery, fear or fondness, we should contribute to your damnation,

(3.) Do

SERM. (3.) Do not hasten the death of your pro-VIII. phets. They will die foon enough; your great bleffings are removed, when they are thrust out of the world; contribute not to it by unkindness; drive them not hence by grief, by unperfuadableness, divisions, or reproaches (which are frequently heartbreaks) nor yet starve them and their families by your penuriousness.

IT was a prophet who reckon'd God Pfal. lviii. would put his tears into his bottles. You have but a short time to express your kindness, and that may be shortned by your provoking God to remove them, or by your disturbing them to such an agitation of mind, as may hasten their death: But know, as they deferve better at your hands, fo the calmer their returns may be, the forer and fuddener will be God's testimony

against you in their vindication.

(4.) Expect and prepare for your own death. If the prophet is not to live for ever, be fure the gentleman or tradefman shall not do so. Can'ft thou, who art drowned in worldly cares, look to be fpared, when the most useful men must die? Is thy fervice to a common good, or thy fitness for it, equal to many dead prophets, whose bodies are meat for worms long fince? God, who values men and their lives by usefulness, will not be more tender of the dry tree than the green. When he arrests by death, those who spend and

are

are spent for the good of souls, he'll make SERM. less of cutting thee down, who either VIII. cumberest the ground, or art less signisi-

cant to the publick.

OH! therefore learn to die, by dying daily; be and do what you would wish yourselves to have been and done, when on a death-bed. Get into a state which God's gospel-covenant secures; see your hopes be such, as the nearness of eternal objects cannot shake, when by their nearness they shall awaken thee. Carry it so, as not to be ashamed at Christ's coming; busy your-1 John in selves to lay up what will prove treasures in another world; and take not up with, nor lay out your prime thoughts and strength, on what you must leave, and be disappointed by.

In a word, never think your title to eternal life can be too clear; and be you always intent to improve your meetness for heaven's enjoyments and employs, that so you may be suited to find felicity in the

former, and pleasure in the latter.

3. To you of this flock, from whom two ministers have been snatched away in so little time.

(1.) Be awakened and humbled, as far as divine displeasure is instanced by the death of your pastor. Our deceased brother is taken away in an age sit for the labour of many years, and yet advantaged by experience to be of greater use than younger

SERM. younger men; and therefore his death is a VIII. greater indication of anger, than if he had been either too aged or raw for service.

been either too aged or raw for fervice. Tho' I have nothing to lay to your charge, yet I call you to make enquiry what God reproves. Believe it, the death of ministers of years, adapted to publick good, is no small judgment in itself, and very often a presage of greater. Is it nothing to see a bright light extinguished in this dark world? a praying person taken away, when fins cry aloud, and fore judgments threaten this land? What's a stroke, if it be none to have fuch a one removed, who, knowing the state of your fouls, could adapt his exhortations to it. You must feel it a calamity that you shall see him no more, by whom God communicated his grace and comfort to your fouls. It must be a doleful complaint, I shall be no more warned by him, who oft kindled in me an holy fire; I shall learn no more of him, who, by the bleffing of Christ, often conveyed to me a saving light; he shall not again rouze me out of a secure frame, satisfy my perplexing doubts, or reduce me from those wanderings which tended to my ruin. You who were converted by his labours, need not be taught to cry, My father, my father, to my unspeakable loss and grief, is dead. As to the presage, the righteous are generally taken away from the evil to come. Sirs, it is coming, it will be fore: All can perceive.

ceive, that way is made for wolves among SERM. Straggling sheep, when shepherds are called VIII.

hence, &c.

(2.) Be not a reproach to your deceased prophets after their decease. Should you be giddy, should you backslide, their care and skill would be subject to challenge, as if they had not established your minds by their ministry and example. Let their name be made precious by your soundness, stability, religious walk, and fruitfulness in every good work.

(3.) Tremble least they witness against any Isa. xlix. of you. Many will be their joy and crown 4. in the great day; see that all be such: for it will be dreadful; that they who loved you as their own souls, should give a testimony that shall render your aggravated condemnation just; they will honour the

fentence of Christ even against you.

(4.) Be careful in the choice of a successor. Adore the goodness of God, that your loss may be tolerably repaired, so that ye need not be long as sheep without a shepherd. I am thankful to God, you are neither indifferent about a supply, nor so nice and captious, as no man can please you, who is most likely to profit you: A distemper too common in our days, and will bring fatal consequences.

ALL the advice I would give you is, be unanimous, as hath hitherto been your praise, and propose your truly spiritual

edification,

VIII. whom you call, most fitted to subserve.

He that can most affist you to be safe in reaching, and most meet to enter into heaven, will be your surest and highest blessing. Niceties and trislings will yield but little pleasure, when you come upon the borders of another world; these, I'm sure, were not approved by either of your former pastors, while they lived in this.

I SHALL conclude with some account of him lately deceased; and be the shorter, because it was his own way, and also his own desire, when I preached on the occa-

fion of his wife's funeral.

God began to deal effectually with his heart in his tender years, and prayer (his great talent) was his frequent exercise when very young. His soul thus truly changed by conversion, and affisted by constant supplies in return of prayer, he avoided infection, and became armed against the snares of the university; yea, so notedly serious, as to be admitted into the intimate society of some of the gravest divines in that place.

HE was but young when he removed thence to a family of note; there the evil disposition of some persons, made him more cautious than usual; and the restraints his prudence set on his warrantable freedom, commended retirement to his

choice;

choice; that neither the crimes of others SERM. might corrupt or grieve him, nor any in-VIII. advertency of his harden, or be exposed by them.

This retirement was so blest, that he often acknowledged he never enjoyed that uninterrupted communion with God in

fecret, as in the aforesaid family.

In this private condition he lived many years, which he fpent partly in fecuring the great concernments of his own foul. by clearing his evidences, improving his graces, and attaining to a more confirmed state; and partly in informing and fixing his judgment, both in the disputed articles of faith, and in the business of conformity, required of all that were admitted ministers in the national church established by law. The latter he disallowed upon maturest thoughts; nor know I many so qualified to manage that controverfy as he was. In the former, he proved skilful as well as orthodox, tho' disallowing extreams, particularly as to the extent of the death of Christ, and conditionality of the covenant, with feveral things depending thereupon.

HE to whom the end is known from the beginning, and hath in prospect the service he designeth by every instrument, made use of this long retiredness, to qualify our brother for greater usefulness than himself foresaw, or rationally could expect. By this was he prepared to be an eminent

Vol. II. H bleffing

SERM. bleffing in his generation, both in the edu-VIII. cation of youth, and the falvation of finners, by well-adapted labours: Nor did God long forbear, by fuccess, to encourage him in his ministerial service, but gave him an early pledge of more extensive fruits, by the conversion of some in that very family.

> AND left his zeal in awakening the fecure, might carry him to break the bruifed reed, by unbounded feverity in his notions or expressions, providence, about that time, directed his acquaintance with a pious gentlewoman, under great doubts and perplexities of mind; by her experience he became instructed in the various exercises of a child of light walking in darkness: There he found an instance, what a godly person may be reduced to, and how fuch should be dealt with, in those felf-condemning fears; which proceed either from temptation, weakness of mind, bodily indisposition, or the hidings of God's face; yea, fometimes from all together. But as hereby he was prepared to be a vessel of consolation to many, fo he became, by the divine bleffing, a means of peace to this diffressed person, after the long endeavours of feveral good ministers had failed to satisfy her.

THE purposes of his more obscure course of life being obtained, he was directed into a married state, and that under circumstances greatly tending to his own comfort and publick benefit.

person

person God gave him to be his wife, was SERM. a daughter of major Hubbard in Leicester- VIII. Thire; a woman of fingular piety, good estate, and to him in all respects agreeable. She had refused very considerable matches, from a fixed resolution to dispose of herfelf, as might be most conducive to guard her against the snares of a present life, and prepare her for an endless happiness; and that she was not disappointed herein, was evident by her constant advances in holiness, great meetness for heaven, and comfortable ferenity in death.

Upon this change in his condition, he applied himself to educate young men, and to preach more publickly and constantly. So far was he from that base spirit of some, who espouse idleness, when they are capable to subfift without dependance; whereas our friend reckoned an estate a further obligation to serve the donor, and an encouragement for more fuccessful service, as it shelter'd him against the temptations of the necessitous, set him above contempt, and obviated that prejudice against all ministers, as if their most serious endeavours came from no higher aims than to procure a maintenance. His governing dexterity by a due mixture of fweetness, art, and authority, gave him no small advantage to profit youth, under the difadvantages of a private academy. His dili-

gence was extraordinary, until a great dif-H 2

temper

VIII. ged his house, as a nursery for heaven, as well as a school for improving learning; and there are so very many excellent ministers in the church, and eminent gentlemen already qualified to serve their country; yea, disposed so to do so by his care and skill to principle them, as are fully sufficient to excuse my saying any thing as to his stock

of learning and judgment.

WHAT more deferves my regard, is, that of which himself made the highest account, and frequently inculcated on other students, viz. A faithful, diligent aim at usefulness in faving immortal fouls, and the precisest care to adapt their study and labours to this end. From this defign he could not be bribed, by an employ of far higher benefit to his family; nor diverted by those many threatnings, feveral losses or imprifonments he endured. Faith gave him fuch a view of the intrinfick nature, and eternal consequence of the work of the ministry, that he could not fail to judge it to be worthy of the deepest studies, a reward of the most diligent labour, a compensation for the forest sufferings, and best becoming the greatest souls.

As the eternal alvation of men was his fixed defign, so he concluded the best way to effect it, was a plain, warm, familiar way of preaching; therefore he chiefly regarded the frame of his own beart in his

work,

work, as what suggested the most moving SERM. words, and whence, by the divine bleffing, he expected greatest success. And indeed the affectionate seriousness of his auditory under this method, encouraged him thereto, altho' his fermons should not please the eye of the reader, as they moved people at the hearing.

In pursuit of this end, he took hold of private feafons, especially the time of fickness, and very industriously visited fick people, in hope that the nearness of another world might awaken attention and concernedness, in all directions tending to prepare them for fafety in it. As he would chearfully and thankfully mention the fuccess of his pains with any person, so he with bitterness bewailed that certain juncture of his life, wherein a bleffing was more sparingly afforded to his endeavours.

Bur tho' God secured to himself the glory of making the word efficacious, and awaken'd his servant to inquisitiveness and bumility, by fuffering him fometime to cry, I have laboured in vain; yet he often favoured his zeal for the benefit of others, by a fignal blessing on his ministry. Many of his pupils call him spiritual father. About the vale of Beaver he diffused saving light, and was an instrument in the conversion of great numbers; among whom some despifers of himself were very remarkable instances. In other parts of the country,

VIII. nor did his words altogether return in vain in this city, but had good effect to convince and regenerate feveral perishing finners, as well as to establish and edify many

whom he found begotten unto Christ.

Nor is it very common with God to with-hold his influences, where there are such good presages of success; as a humble distrust of our performances, an entire dependance on God's stiftance and blessing, and a solicitous dread of being useless: Each of which took up much place in his discourse with intimates. It was a common saying with him, I am much as a common saying with him sa

A FEAR of an unuseful life, was what frequently and deeply possessed his mind; nor was there any thing he did oftner and more expressly deprecate. When some unhappy circumstances brake his school, it was his frequent moan, Now every field is unpleasant, for fear I shall live to no purpose. Also in his last sickness, his usual cry was, Oh! let me not live incapable of service, unsit to be employed. And when, a little before his death, his indisposition for study and preaching seemed a little a-

bated,

bated, what joy possessed him, what thank- SERM. ful acknowledgments did he utter! VIII.

NEITHER is it unworthy our notice, how indulgent the providence of God was towards his fervant, and regardful of his concernedness for his work; for in a few days after his complaints upon the period put to his school, he was invited to be a paster in this place: And God also put an end, by death, to that his latter dread of an unprofitable life; yet not before he had improved that short lightning, by returning to his preaching work, which he intermitted not till a very few days before he died; as if God at once would remarkably prevent what his servant feared, and grant him an opportunity to shew his faithful zeal.

But his useful attempts were not confined to mere ministerial work, or the education of young men, but he was of publick influence in the country (where he was better acquainted than in London) in advising his neighbours in their intricate affairs, and composing differences among them; yea, also in successfully guiding multitudes in what concerned the safety and liberty of this nation, when the tide ran high against

religion and property.

I THINK what I have already instanced, will justify my saying that we have lost an useful man, and also discover his great zeal to be such. And yet besides what his prosperous ministry, with other things, do con-

H 4

SERM. tribute to that character, many of his pupils VIII. are winning fouls, and promoting the interest of our blessed Redeemer, whereby the extent of his usefulness is beyond my reach to measure; for the blessing in it, is like successively to descend to several ages.

Moreover, his care to observe the conduct of providence was very strict, wellknowing man's unskilfulness to direct his ways, and the bitterness of displeasing events, when we trust to our own conduct; as well as our usurpation of God's place, whenever we affume it. Therefore he was accustomed to say, I can go any where, if God will lead. Nor was he less ready, with thankfulness, to ascribe all welcome issues and benefits received, to the fame providence; as also to be submissively refigned to its disposals in what appeared more severe. A greater instance of this last can scarce be given, than his calm submisfion under the loss of his yoke-fellow; which is little less than rending from one the half of one's felf.

By his great moderation towards all who differed in judgment, he became acceptable to men of several denominations; nor could it be otherwise on the account of opinion, except with such who limit their charity, as well as their communion, by the narrow bounds of their own party; which on this very account is to be suspected, to have neither a good cause, nor much judg-

ment,

ment, further than selfishness is concerned. SERM.

As he was ready to shew kindness to his VIII. friends, so his charity to the necessitous was not barren. Several poor students he supported, yea, at times hath maintained a minister and his family, until an employment was provided for their subsistence.

Nor was he ungrateful for any favour he received: With how tender a fense did he acknowledge the abundant affection of this church! yet still therewith bewailing he could be no more useful to you; which testified that he laboured willingly with you, from a grateful sense of your kindness, as well as faithfully from his duty to God. Happy ministers so obliged! and happily advantaged people who so engage them!

But served he God for nought? Far from it: Mercy fill'd his life beyond that of many faithful ministers: He felt not the streights or snares of an indigent condition. Instead of trouble or temptation by a wife, the was a relief under trial, a support to his integrity, and a helper on of his falvation; and he apparently faw many of his children in the way to heaven, and one well qualified and useful to bring others thither. He was tenderly loved by his relations, and furvived neither a will nor gifts for service: He took a kind of folemn leave in the fermon he preached, with his usual warmth, within a few days of the period of his life; and mercy followed VIII. fon was not intermitted, no, nor grace neither. He prayed with great fervor; the tempter was chained from disturbing; he was full of inward comfort; gasping, he chearfully joined with the prayers of others, and died without a groan.

THESE gleanings from his useful life, should awaken us to follow his steps, wherein he is imitable. His faithful labours with you, call aloud for proportionable fruit; and seeing a capacity employed in service, will not perpetuate life, let all of us spend

ours as dying persons.



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A

# Thanksgiving-SERMON

FOR THE

## SUCCESS

OF

HER MAJESTY'S FORCES.

Preach'd at Hand-Alley, Nov. 12. 1702.



# Thankflying SERMON

TUGCEES S

RECEIVED TO THE STANDARD



#### THE

# PREFACE.

REPORT that the success of her Majesty's arms was not pleasing to us Diffenters, is one reason of publishing this sermon; wherein

ill-willers may find us affected with our victories, as a common benefit, as well as directions to improve them. I was at some loss whence this suspicion could arise, after we had solemnly, in the appointed fast, and usually throughout the campaign, prayed for this success; yea, and when we neither do, nor can, propose any interest separate from that of all true English Protestants.

But by the early use some hot clergymen make of our prosperity, I am instructed, that a consciousness of the wound designed us by them, raised a jealousy in themselves, that what render'd the execution more safe, must needs be displeasing to the sufferers: Yet here their narrow spirits are not our standard; for I assure them, that we still thank God for this publick benefit, by weakning France; though we are grieved, that what's so great a blessing in its own na-

ture, should be abused by them to purposes no more hurtful to the enemy, than if the

French king were the adviser.

The moderate principles I still espouse, (to the offence of several) gives me the greater uneasiness, when moderation is exposed as the worst of crimes, and more mortal strokes are still levelled at the dying remains of charity among us; as if the holy catholick church, and the communion of faints, were expung'd out of our present creed. But why must this course be supported by the imputation of hypocrify? when none can be ignorant, that the generality of English Presbyterians avow'd occafional communion with the church of England, as their principle, and frequently did so communicate, before the sacramental test was enacted: Nor faw they how it's blameable, when Christ and his apostles worshipped in the Jewish temple and synagogues, and in their separate meetings too.

However, fince divisions are so lightly accounted of during a war, which needs our united strength, if prosecuted as our own and Europe's safety requires; and when it's the undoubted interest of our glorious Queen, to be the head of the Protestants; a zeal for publick good must engage all mens foresight, to what these tend, and where

they will iffue.

A church standing on its steeple spire, is not a figure of what's most established; yet this

this it a fit emblem of any Protestant party that lays its whole stress upon, and discriminates itself with severity from all others, by that which is not any pretended article of faith, and wholly useless to divine worship, discipline, or any other truly christian purpose, except a mere recognition of the authority of the imposer; which is no ordinary reason for any human laws, and much less decent for those made by a church, which hath no power, except for edification. Besides this narrowness of the bottom, I, and all others who defire the national church to be ever a strong bulwark against popery, do observe, that among its members, there will be left a great number of persons truly pious and moderate, hating violence, and zealous only for the effentials of religion, in principle and practice; and not a few heterodox, or profane, or haters of all clergy. Now, when none of these can be thought well cemented by the forecited points, the warm and narrow party, as such, will be subject to great temptations, when they find Popish assaults, not against what they distinguished themselves by, but only against what's common to all other Protestants.

Nor ought it to be a despised indication of providence, that the two grand points, by which the high men of the clergy were characteriz'd in former reigns, have been exposed and disowned by themselves; the dostrine

doctrine of passive obedience by the Jurors in the last, yea, this present reign; and that of the magistrates power in religion, by the Nonjurors, and many others.

That God would avert his judgments, by preventing an increase of guilt by our successes, and make us as happy by them, as the influence of a publick, wise, and moderate spirit, on all our affairs, would render us; is my unseigned prayer, as a true lover of the Protestant religion, the government, and nation.

Decemb. 2.

Daniel Williams.

2 CHRON. XX. 26, 27, 28.

And on the fourth day they assembled themselves in the valley of Berachah, for there they blessed the Lord, &c. Then they returned every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat in the fore-front of them, to go again to Jerusalem with joy: For the Lord had made them to rejoice over their enemies, and they came to Jerusalem with psalteries, and harp, and trumpets, unto the house of the Lord.



HAT the fitness of this SERM.

text to our present solem- IX.

nity may be more evident,

I shall state the occasion of this triumph, with short remarks on each head.

i. Jehoshaphat, after a great reformation, is affaulted by a numerous host of Vol. II. I idolatrous SERM. idolatrous enemies, ver. 1, 2. It came to IX. pass after this also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, &c. came against fehoshaphat to battle, &c. Idolaters are apt to combine against reformed churches; nor ought ensuing wars to be accounted a divine rebuke for reformation.

2. The fense of this danger excites feboshaphat to publick fasting, and fervent prayers, ver. 3, to 13. This is the fasest course in all extremities: And oh hopeful and happy fudah in a truly reforming and praying prince!

3. God presently assures them of conquest, and this by his own more immediate hand, ver. 14, to 17. The serious prayers of a reformed people, in extreme dangers, soon meet with signal answers.

4. THE king believeth, and praiseth God, as if the victory were already obtained, and persuades the people to the highest considence in the prophet's message; ver. 18, to 21. Faith, in the promises of God, and thankfulness for them, are good pledges of their accomplishment.

5. God fulfils what he engaged; both in the ruin of the enemy, and in the very manner predicted, that vast multitude is destroyed by their own hands. Jehoshaphat's army was too faint for so great a slaughter; God therefore employs an angel, or impressent the minds of the adversaries

versaries upon mistakes, or jealousies, to be- SERM. come their own mutual executioners. Yea, IX. God doth not only perform the utmost of his engagement by fubduing the enemy, but exceeds his word by enriching 'Judah with their vast and unexpected treasures; ver. 22, to 25. The multitude and strength of united armies, become but greater trophies to the despised, when God engageth their defeat. And those treasures which were to help the strongest, are eafily made enriching spoils to the weakest bands, whom God undertakes to lead. I need not add, God's performances oft exceed, but never fall short of the utmost good included in his promises.

6. Jehoshaphat and his people entertain this fignal mercy with a becoming fense of God's hand; it struck their minds, and well it might, when the appearance of God in the fuccess of this war, and the consequences thereof to their church and state, were so manifestly great and affecting. The fudden change made in their circumstances was very extreme, viz. the most entire victory over an enemy, every way fitted and ready to destroy them. The hand of God in this victory was also very extraordinary, of which they were convinced, by his foretelling it by his prophet, upon their prayers, as well as by the method of obtaining it. This affecting fense is that, which exerts it felf in the

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IX.

SERM. text as a proper expression thereof; for which you read of a first and second time of thanksgiving. The first in the valley of Berachha, as foon as the work was finished; the other at Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord. Both discovered a grateful mind towards God, and a zeal for his honour; the former by the haste, the latter by the folemnity of their acknowledgments. They thought the publishing of God's praise could be neither too soon, too often, nor too folemn.

To introduce the doctrine, of which I shall treat, I need no further reference to the context, than faying, the war attended with the forementioned fuccess was a just war; for it was approved by God to be fuch, and undertaken by authorized per-

fons in felf-defence, ver. 11, 15.

Doct. Signal successes given by God in a just war, are ground of great joy, as also of the most devout praises, blessings, and thanksgivings to God.

THIS doctrine is felf-evident as to the truth of it, for not to rejoice, were unnatural; not to be thankful, were devilifh; not to bless and praise the Lord, were brutal; and to do this otherwise than devoutly, would be hypocritical and profane. Signal fuccesses given by God in a just war, afford sufficient reason for all this; thence cogent motives are derived.

Yea,

Yea, and being granted as the state of our SERM. case, the light of nature and common IX. ingenuity demand such acts in return; they being no other than a just tribute from the receivers to the blessed donor.

INDEED, were there no fuccess, there would be place for mourning; if the fuccess be inconsiderable, joy would be in lower degrees; if the war be unjust, success would be a snare: Moreover, if God had no hand in the success of a just war, he should not be entitled to praises and thanksgivings for that success; yea, were not the success signal, and his hand great in the victory, the argument for very bigh praises would not be so evidently strong.

But when all such abatements are excluded, and their contraries very manifest, there can be no excuse from any of those acts (no, nor from any degree of them) which are by the doctrine required as a dutiful return for the benefits mentioned

therein.

HAVING hinted at the evident truth of the doctrine, as far as it connects the benefit received, and the duties enjoined, I need not enlarge further on it, as a general head; and the rather, because the suitableness of it to our present solemnity is so exact, that whatever explication is necessary shall be attended to, either, when I urge the forementioned duties, or when I demonstrate, that our acknow-

SERM. ledg'd mercies do include all these sup-

IX. posed reasons of such duties.

I shall therefore apply and confine the doctrine to our case, wherein the whole of it is comprehended; there we shall find what will justify a becoming joy over our enemies, and awaken us gratefully to praise and bless the Lord our God. For this we have eminent cause; in this we cannot exceed, if we regard the description which I shall give of these several duties.

IT being impossible to pursue the full scope of this head in one discourse, I shall consider it under these two more substan-

tial parts.

I. The grounds upon which fundry duties are required. These are summed up in those words; signal successes given us by God in a just war against our enemies. This is the very mercy we posses; and it is of that nature, as to support the fitness and necessity of those solemn thanksgivings we profess to offer: Thanksgivings appointed by the government, and wherein our glorious queen is, with Jehoshaphat, in the fore front of her people.

II. The duties required upon these grounds: These are several, viz. Praise, blessing, thanksgiving, and joy. Each of these, whereof not one may be omitted, for all these are just upon the same common reason; yea, and somewhat of each ought to be intermingled, which ever of them is most

expresly

expresty attended to. We should chear- SERM. fully and thankfully praise and bless our Lord; we must rejoice with thankful adoration and praises to our God; we should offer thanksgivings with joy and adoring praises. So that if you perform any one of these aright, you must take in all as necessary ingredients; because to rejoice without praises and thanksgivings to God is a carnal joy: To thank and praise the Lord without joy is too fullen, and must be fo far streightened: To thank God without blessing him would set us on too rude a level with God, whom we ought most devoutly to adore: To bless and praise God without joyful thanksgivings would too much extinguish praise, and shew our want of a due sense of our own interest in the benefit received.

THEREFORE we ought to exercise our selves in all these, and get every motion of our hearts tinctured with each, calling up our spirits to excite which sever of them seems omitted, or more remiss.

### SECT. I.

BUT I shall consider both these parts

more distinctly and fully.

I. THE grounds upon which the feveral duties are required, viz. The fignal fuccesses given us by God in our just war against the enemy.

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Thefe

IX.

SFRM. THESE I shall clear, that the reasons and motives to the feveral duties may be more vident, affecting, and forcible. I shall reduce these, 1. To the justness of the 2. To the fignalness of the success. (1.) In the greatness of it. (2.) In the momentous consequences of it. (3.) In the manifestation of God therein.

1. The war wherein we are engaged is a just war. Had we undertaken this war for ill ends, fuch as vain glory, unjust usurpations of power, rapine, enlargement of territories, or unlawful revenge; had it been entered into to defend a bad cause, or in a treacherous breach of contracts, or needlesly to disturb our neighbours, or to overturn the ballance of Europe, or the like; we could not then justly have prayed for the Almighty's bleffing on our arms, neither would our fuccess prove in the issue a national mercy.

But it is not thus: No, the injustice lies altogether on our enemies part, on the French king's ambition, oppressions, cruelty, depredations, treachery, and usurping defigns; these lodge at his door; and this fo evidently, that the world might have been affured God intended no real bleffing for him, even when he was most victorious; but that he was referved for greater vengeance, which he now begins to feel, to the leffening his glory, that idol,

the

the total eclipse whereof is presaged by this SERM. present stroke.

WHEREAS the cause on our part is the defence of our just rights, and those of our allies against his attempts; the recovering of what he fo injuriously usurped, and the fecuring of Europe from that flavery and ruin, which his preparations and advantages visibly threatned; yea, so near was the danger, that a short delay must have subjected the Empire, Holland, and our felves to his infults. And when we once had been reduced under his power. you may judge by his former invafions and perfidiousness, whether justice, honour, or charity, could restrain his will. His barbarous management of advantages appears in numerous instances, to all persons, who remember his proceedings against Lorain, Netherlands, Suabia, Treves, Palatinate, Cologn, Mentz, Wirtemberg, Spires, &c.

But besides our taking the alarm from his exorbitant power, and vast preparations, which the law of nations admit to be a just cause for war; we have much more to justify our undertaking. He, against the most solemn oaths of renunciation, hath taken possession of Spain, to the injury of the emperor; yea, this is done against the express articles covenanted with us in the treaty of Partition. It is true, he offers for apology, that he could

1 Chron.

SERM. not divest his children of their right by his renouncing. But besides the falshood of this, as to national contracts, was not he barred from employing his own treafure, arms, and power, against his oaths? If this be not enough, he hath fet up and proclaimed for king of these our nations, the pretended prince of Wales, against the established laws of this realm, yea, and against his folemn covenants in the treaty at Refwick.

strate the justice of it, that this, with the things depending on the war, may give it the title of one of the wars of the Lord, and not unfitly allow us to apply our fuccess thereto, in these words; And they made v. 20, 21. war with the Hagarites, and they were belped against them, and the Hagarites were delivered into their hands, &c. because the

THESE reasons of the war so demon-

war was of God.

2. THE success of this just war against our enemies is very fignal. It is not fo common as to be overlooked among ordinary occurrences; there's that impressed upon it which commands observation and wonder, yea, and obligeth to unufual acknowledgments, which will be granted, if we rightly confider the greatness and the consequences of this success, with the evident tokens of the hand of God therein.

(1.) THE fuccess is fignal, with respect to the greatness of it. We, with our allies,

allies, have prevailed both at fea and at SERM. land; not in a few, but many places; not in a small number of struggles, but in multitudes; not in mean instances, but in those very considerable; not against a weak unprepared baffled enemy, but against a powerful prepared adversary, confident of victories, and accustomed to them. Take a fmall part instead of a full enumeration; in Flanders, Liege, Keiserswart, Venlo, Ruremond, are reduced by the united forces under the earl of Marlborough: Upon the Rhine, Landaw, confiderable as a pass, and for its strength, is taken: In Italy, prince Eugene obtained great advantages at Luzara, and other places. Our forces under the duke of Ormond, at Vigo, have gotten a confiderable treasure, and there are burnt and taken seventeen galleons, fifteen men of war, with feveral other veffels. It would be tedious to include in this account what prizes we have taken at fea, and what we have gained at New-England, Newfoundland, and the Leeward Islands, the one half would fuffice to commend our fuccess as very great.

(2.) THE success is signal in its consequences and probable effects. They are not small mischiefs which are obstructed, no less than slavery, popery, and barbarous usages; the good in prospect is not trivial, unless religion, civil liberties, our inheri-

tance,

SERM. tance, fafety, and trade, must be so accounted. The ships and treasure lost at Vigo conduce to break the French meafures; that king reckoned by this flota to bribe men of influence in feveral courts, camps, and navies, and greatly to augment his forces. Nor is it improbable that he ventured on vaster expence than his stated funds did answer, in prospect of this money, a disappointment wherein strikes

in the tenderest part!

THE ships and seamen taken and lost in this war, will not a little check his formidableness at sea, where, for many years, he hath so applied his care. His trade, and awful name, will be subject to abatement, and his resolved obstruction to his neighbours traffick far less promising. At land, there's a way almost opened to France by Landaw: good frontiers obtained for Holland, with forage and contribution for the confederate forces in Flanders; besides an advantage for further conquests by their fituation: Nor is it a small matter that in Italy, there's time for the relief of prince Eugene, for a more hopeful campaign.

Nor doth it less affect the whole, that the alliances have encouragement to be more fixed against the attempts to gull men; yea, they are like to be enlarged by Portugal, and other states, who were deterred by fear; and an addition made to their force, by fuch as a most unhappy

war

war in the North diverted. Tho' I may SERM. have occasion under another head to en- IX. large this account, yet with any who have a love to their country, a regard for mankind, a zeal for religion, and an abhorrence of publick devastations, with any sense to judge of the tendency of things; enough is already offered for their conviction, that the success is to be allowed signal in respect of its consequences.

(3.) THE fuccess is signal, by the eminent appearances of the band of God therein.

THOUGH God did not give us victories fo immediately, or by means altogether fo improbable, as in the case of Jeboshaphat; yet the fool may fee, and the profane must acknowledge a very remarkable concern of God therein. Can we strictly obferve an exact account of fuccesses, and not be forced to fay, Surely the Lord our Josh.xxiii. God fought for us? A calm view of fundry 10. circumstances will affectingly inform us, that its a fignal providence which continued and invigorated the confederacy after king William's death, who, by his greatness and integrity, was the very heart and centre of it; and when too many influencing persons shewed an aversion to the war.

DID not the hand of God appear, that in bodies of military men so different in temper, interest, and inclination; yet so great a harmony was maintained among both officers

IX. low our almighty God, was able to support the forces of our allies in Italy, when under such disadvantage for number, garrisons, money, and supplies? yet they did not only maintain their ground, where the French king directed his chief strength, but had often the better of his army, though so much advantaged to execute his resolution, to rid that country of the Germans this last year. Did not our God so spirit our soldiers at Venlo, and the citadel of Liege, that the enemy with wonder exclaimed, these men have wings as well as hands for their assaults!

Was it not a divine adjustment which so bastened the surrender of Landaw, beyond the duke of Bavaria's expectation, whereby a force was fet at liberty to restrain the depredations, he, with the French, were refolved to commit? When God let us fee how subject we were to baffling difappointments in our attempts on Cadiz, even where we feemed most affured of fuccess, and best provided; his mere providence locked up our fleet by contrary unusual winds, which else had arrived in England under that reproach. By his providence the unexpected news of the flota's being at Vigo was brought to our fleet, thus imprisoned to wait the tidings, which the bearer came to the knowledge of without defign. Our God, the God of the spirit

of all flesh, made the best advice to sway SERM. the officers to the attempt. He provided a IX. popish priest, with two or three other men, to be near the shore, who (though unwillingly) discovered to us our difficulties. dangers, and best way of affaulting their own friends. He, the Lord, raised a mist, which concealed us from our furprized enemies, and hurried our men down an unwonted precipice to their amazement, whereby the volunteers possessed the fort, before the appointed parties arrived. Are not each of these a divine footstep? and yet, without these, that momentous affair had been either unattempted, or miscarried. But God directed the whole matter fo to cover our reproach abroad, and prevent our murmurs at home, as if we had left Cadiz only to seize the flota. Who can difregard his providence, which found a way so seasonably to make full amends for our disappointment? and contrived for us a greater benefit, by finding them fecured at Vigo, than if we had beaten them at fea, where a great number of the ships had escaped by flight?

THESE were the Lord's doings, and they are marvellous in our eyes, as they are the traces of his wisdom, and indications of his favour to unworthy England, under so perplexed an exigency. Nor dare I overlook in this propitious event of our retreat from Cadiz, a divine tenderness for king

William's

SERM. William's reputation, who adjusted that enterprize; which though he defigned in a way more favourably circumstantiated for fuccess, than could be followed as to feveral particulars; yet ungrateful people arraigned his name, as if he had been the author of the miscarriage in the execution. But tho' that clamour be hushed by this occurrence, yet in what amazement must every true Protestant Englishman enquire, What is the defign to be ferved, by what principle are they acted, who pretending the same character, do prostitute the same of that glorious prince, as if he had never delivered us from popery and flavery; or that his making the way to Protestant succeffors (both at present and hereafter) in the throne; or his chusing the best of the clergy to fill the fees, and justest of lawyers to fill the bench, were injuries never to be forgiven?

Moreover, the lustre of providence is not obscured by reserving this heap of humbling victories over the French king, to a time when he thought his long-designed project could no further be obstructed; when the riches, force, and territories of Spain were in his hand; when King William (his only dreaded impediment) was removed; when his preparations, in all respects, so assured him of a general triumph, and an universal monarchy, that he publickly affronted every state which he could

not bribe; infulted all potentates whom he SERM. might not blind to be their own betrayers and destroyers: Then, even then, God proceeds to fully his glory, to abase his excellency, and bring down his high looks. But as if this were not enough to aggravate his abasement, a yet keener edge is set to his galling frets; for God directs these successes to a time when a female sits upon our throne; under ber conduct our forces triumph; in the words whereby Deborah did accent the praise of God, and the reproach of Jabin, our Queen may fay, The Lord Judg. v. made me have dominion over the mighty: 13. ME, a woman, over this MIGHTY French king. By this very circumstance, God adds to his humiliation, which must more affect his mind, than if such insults had befallen him when our affairs were managed by our late king, who had stopped this torrent so long, baffled his defigns so often, who was fo fure to improve and purfue all advantages against him; and who, by his approved fagacity, experience, and zeal for the essentials of the Protestant religion, and liberties of Europe, was so far above the infinuations of the French tools, that none fuch could have confidence to fuggest them, unless they were forward to be exposed.

To add no more, We ought to acknowledge the hand of God, in that by this fuccess he provides for the honour of his own worship, when the age profanely ridi-VOL. II.

19.

SERW, cules fasting and prayer, as things of mere form, and useless. Therefore God gives this fuccess in return of solemn national prayers. He who decreeth as well the means as the end, excited our gracious Queen to begin the campaign with a publick fast, and it just endeeb with a most significant part of our success, when all our defigned attempts were over with the feafon of action. This feems to be cast in with a special purpose, to encourage devotion; that whilst his workings shew his approbation of the homage paid him, all may confess, be faid not to the feed of Jacob, feek ye me in vain.

THE first part of the doctrine being finished, with fome enlargement on the last head, as what most directly induceth that regard to God, which is to be expressed in the following duties, I proceed to the fe-

cond part.

Cules

II. THE duties towards God, which are required in return for these successes.

HE who conferr'd these benefits, is our proprietor and ruler; he governs us as well as faves us, and therefore wifely provides that all his mercies are subservient to our obedience. When he, as a benefactor, owneth us, it is that we may acknowledge him, and that in some proportion to his appearance for us, and to the bleffings he conveys thereby.

THE

THE Holy God worketh marvellous SERM. things, not to indulge mens lufts, or fon-IX. dle regardless sinners: such a design by the least of his works, must highly reflect on his purity, and his just regard for his own honour and government. His blessed nature must be unknown to them, who are insensible that he inclines them to dutifutness by every deliverance, he supports the obligation of his laws by all successes, claims a tribute of praise at the expence of wonders, and expects loyal observance in agreeable duties, as he displays the glory of his nature by his marvellous works.

THE doctrine mentions those duties wherewith Jeboshaphat and his people entertain'd their victory; nor can we be just to God, if we, in the like case, imitate not their example, at least in what is naturally moral, and positively instituted under the gospel oeconomy. That praising and blesfing the ever-bleffed God, and rendring to him our thanksgivings, accompanied with joy, are of this kind, cannot be disputed by fuch as scruple the psaltery, barp, and trumpet: nor yet can they, who have liberty to use the latter, so much as doubt the other duties to be the most effential, and so highly regarded by God, that he will no further accept of any externals, than as expressive of them; yea, that he, as an infinitely wife and holy Spirit, must despife all musical performances, if the soul be not duly K 2

SERM. duly exercised in praising and blessing him, IX. and that with a beart impressed by thankfulness, and enlarged with joy. I shall therefore call you to apply yourselves with all seriousness to each of these duties.

## SECT. II.

1. PRAISE God for all that's great in the fuccess of our arms.

I would not detract from the valour. conduct, or fidelity of any instruments; they were appointed for this purpose, and God hath put great honour on their names, by making use of them in this glorious fuccess. But God must not be overlook'd, no nor rival'd by them; they and we, from a conviction of his greater influence, Pfal. cxv. must fay, Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory. They are but instruments, whom God doth qualify, and therefore may be content to affirm it in the words of a man, who was well instructed Pfal. exiv. in military affairs: Bleffed is the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war. and my fingers to fight. It argues a profane mind, to ascribe little to him, who gave every degree of the fuccess: For it was his eye directed to whatever tended to it, and his will determined the iffue of each encounter.

THE Almighty ought to be praised even for such victories wherein second causes

causes act, and succeed most consonantly to Serm. their aptitude; for 'tis he dispenseth virtue, IX. skill, and courage to every agent; yea, he could have suspended these, and by assisting the other side, made it invincible. But where God hath manifested himself for our success, by means incompetent, by ways improbable and surprizing, and given victory beyond rational hopes; we are then in an especial manner to observe his hand, and ascribe the entire glory to him.

THEREFORE now review our successes in every instance, in every aggrandizing circumstance, and thereupon lift your very hearts to God as the author; say, Lord, these are thy works, this and that hast thou done; it was too great for a weaker hand, it was too remarkable for a less glorious agent; but they are in all respects what become thine excellency to perform. Take heed of formality in your acknowledgements, but from a convinced judgment, a well persuaded mind, and with warm affections, declare before him, Neither did Psal. xliv. their own arm save them, but thy right 3 hand, and thine arm.

HE ought to be highly praised upon all his works, which appear great; and among these, conquest in war is often mentioned, and with respect hereto, He will be called 2 Sam. vi. the Lord of hosts, and the God of battel. 2. Nor is it strange, that he is in holy writ so frequently addressed under this title, be-

K 3

SERM. cause his own honour, and his peoples XI. happiness, are secured by his being the sole arbiter of wars; and the last decision of national contests, and grandest affairs, being by hosts and battels. His praise as Lord of Hosts, is the same as Lord of all human affairs, against the greatest force which can be muster'd, yea, served by all those forces, tho raised for contrary purposes; and not disappointed by the weakest bands, which are intended to execute his designs. Upon this very account, as he wisely forbids our trust in the arm of stess, when war is undertaken, so he justly de-

LET us then with one heart proclaim, Thou, our God, art Lord of bosts, and as such hast several ways this year abated the pride of France; thou hast assisted us and our allies, wherein ever they or we have prospered against that enemy. Hadst not thou been on our side, we had been overwhelmed, as well as been disappointed of that success, wherein we now rejoice. Thus it becomes us to commend and publish his great name for all his mighty works.

mands the praise whenever we do succeed.

2. BLESS God for all the displays of his glory, in those successes you praise him for:

Ps. exerciv. Lift up your bands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord. Blessing as man's act towards God as the object, is far from being the same with his blessing of men; for we thereby can in no wife better him, nor add

10

to his glory or happiness, tho' in that sense Serve. indeed we are blessed by bim. Praising God, XI. and blessing him, are often convertible terms, and when either of them alone is mentioned, the other is connoted. But when both are mentioned together as difting duties, blessing God implies somewhat besides mere offering of praises to him, or celebrating his same, as the recognized efficient of those great works which we commemorate. What that is, will be collected out of the following passages, wherein I shall call upon you to bless his venerable name.

The glory of the Lord hath been difplayed; the excellency of his nature, and the transcendency of many of his attributes have brightly skined, in bringing about those great things for which we have praised him. Let us now join our blessings with his praises, adore him for those perfections which are so eminently represented; let your minds be irradiated, your whole souls be filled, your wills be impressed, yea, your very fancy and imagination be in an extasy, at the essulgent beams of his glory. Let his brightness force you to cry out, Thou art Neh, ix.5: above all blessing and praise.

STAND amazed at his own bleffedness in and from himself: He, that all the mighty do thus depend upon for affistance; He, at whose beck the greatest affairs are determined; He, at whose entire disposal are all

K 4

fuccesses,

SERM. fuccesses, with an indifferent regard to the IX. Arength or weakness of instruments; surely He can stand in need of no creature, nor be controuled by any. What must his fulness be, when all spend on his stock from age to age? How unapproachable is that light wherein he dwells, feeing a few beams do overwhelm us, when most qualified to entertain them, as darting forth by his benign workings? What a fountain of bleffedness is he in himself, and unto himfelf, when the overflowing drops thus inrich and advance nations in a moment?

INTO a transport conclude; all are bleffed as they are favoured by, and related to him; Happy art thou, O Ifrael; who is like to xxxiii. 29. thee, a people faved by the Lord? Yea, Pfal. cxliv. bappy is that people whose God is the Lord. The multitude, riches, military skill, or power of the enemy, cannot make us miferable, if thou art our God; nor doth our welfare depend on fuch things among ourfelves, but on thy favour, the only bleffed God, and the author of all bleffings!

> In order to a higher extafy in your conceptions of God, as happy in himself, and of the happiness of his people in him, get your fouls enlivened, enlarged, and fixed in the contemplations of fuch divine perfections, as break forth most discernably by our fuccess, and review each of these with wonder, until your press'd souls do vent themselves in such words as these: O how deep

is thy wisdom, which defeated the plots of SERM. our crafty adversaries, though fo famed IX. for wisdom, secrecy, experience, and unanimity! His enlargement of territory is become his weakness; by his confidence in his bribed dependants, is he betrayed; by his vast expence in heaping treasures, he hath enriched his enemies; by violating treaties, he is become a loofer; by his needless early insolence, he is insulted; by publishing his preparations, his foes became capable to overcome him: thou, O Lord, art wife, only wife, by whom the council of the froward is carried head- Job v. 13. long, and the baffled are led blindfold to great fuccesses!

How irrefiftible is thy power! who hast checked such great armies by lesser numbers, reduced so many towns in so short a time, and put a stop to an enemy, who had such disciplined hosts, and so many faithful experienced officers, united in their dependance on one head!

Who can fathom thy mercy! who hast succeeded forces so far from religious, and given advantages against a cruel enemy, to a people so profane, so divided, so full of malignity against real godliness, so unwilling to be reformed by several tried methods, and so disposed to abuse this very success! which may incline us to express our admiring thoughts as they did:

He overthrew Pharaoh in the red sea, for Pf. exxxvi.

SERM. his mercy endureth for ever: He remembred us in our low estate, for bis mercy endureth for ever. Thence did he derive his arguments, and how vast is that stock which is thus expended from year to year on an unworthy people. When such thoughts are entertained, must not your enlarged hearts break forth a-fresh in such exclamations: Thou art inconceivably happy in these and others of thy blissful perfections! Oh bleffed Israel, above the greatest potentates! because this God is thy rock, defence, strength, and great reward. O happy, the most distressed, if they have a covenant interest in this favour! Most bleffed they who are nearest to thee, who beset thy throne, who are winged for thy fervice, behold thy face, and ever fing thy praise! they need no other weal, they are capable of no higher.

But, oh unhappy those, who sway the brightest scepters, possess the largest territories, command the greatest armies, and insult by the most absolute power, if they have no share in thy favour; for they are not safe, they cannot long be glorious. If their time be come, how soon will thy omnipotency overwhelm them into so abject a state, as shall convince the astonished world, That those who walk in

Dan. iv. 37.

Finally, We cannot be faid to bless God, unless we so contemplate his glory display'd

play'd in what we bless him for, as to be SERM. transform'd and rais'd into defires and IX. resolves, which are correspondent thereto. While we amazedly view his excellency, we must be so impressed and affected, as to find fuch breathings as these; Oh that I could ferve thee with resolution becoming that protection, thy power affures me of, and that reward, which thy benignity will not deny! O, my foul, canft thou fear the greatest strength, when this God is on my fide! trust him, trust him with firmest affiance, yea, in extremest cases it cannot be in vain: Q Lord, its 2 Chron. nothing with thee to help, whether with xiv. 11. many, or with them, who have no power: Help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude: O Lord, thou art our God, let not man prevail against thee.

Blufb, O my foul! that I ever doubted a providence, when I now see the footsteps thereof so evidently, that to deny it would be to affront the plainest sense. Be ashamed, O soul! that I love him so faintly (when I love him most) after such indications of his goodness. Awaken, O my foul! to live to him, to act entirely for him, cleave for ever to him, who is thus wife to guide, thus able to defend, thus gracious to afford his presence, and thus faithful to perform, nay, to outdo his promife.

IX. #8, 19.

SERM. All that is within me, bless him; yea, let all of us unanimously eccho these words Bleffed be the Lord God, the God of Ifrael, who only doth wondrous things: And bleffed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory.

Amen, and Amen.

In this manner blefs you the Lord for all his excellent works, and the great difplays of his glory therein: Nor need we fear any fnare by the affectionate warmth, or that extacy, which supposeth the concurring motion of the animal spirits; for though I require these in bleffing our God, yet it is after the nature and reason of our duty have been examined and judged by fedate and cooler thoughts. But tho' this last posture must be preserved, when we are to pass a judgment on what we are to believe or do; yet for what end are our animal spirits given to intermediate between this earthy dull body, and our heaven-born foul, except it be to wing the foul in its ascending flights, and make the body as its affociate, sharer in its motion, as far as possible. I now proceed to the third duty.

3. OFFER thanksgivings to God for that good you reap, by the successes you

praise and bless him for.

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Join we in offering that zealous re-Pfal. cvii. quest: Ob that man would praise the Lord 21, 22. for his goodness, and for his wonderful works

crifice the facrifices of thanksgivings, and IX. declare his works with rejoicing. Heartily acknowledge the benefits received, and that you are deeply indebted to God for each of them. Let the sense of your obligations command your lives entirely, in serious purposes now, in real performance at all times hereafter; yea, desire and contrive occasions, which may yield the fullest opportunity to express your unseigned gratitude; and when you have made the highest returns, be yet still inquiring, What Pfal. cxvi. I shall render to the Lord for all his be-12. nests towards me?

In order to the better discharge of this part of your duty, acquaint yourselves with the benefits conferred, study and relish the utmost good concluded therein; thank the Almighty God, that you have obtained fuccess, whereas total defeats might have been our lot; thank him, for our fuccess against an enemy, who hath been long the plague of Europe, by his oppreffing attempts, cruel blood-shed, and enflaving example. An enemy for many years mischievous to England, his councils and bribes oft procured divifions among ourselves, to the hazard of our utter ruin. By his influence we engaged in wars against Holland, to the danger of the whole protestant interest, as well as the balance of Europe: He brought those distresses on

Ireland.

SERM. Ireland, attended with the expence of fo IX. much blood and treasure: To his encouragements we owe those plots and treacherous methods, which so frequently threatned the last reign: To him we must ascribe the obstruction to trade, the great consumption of money, and men, in these tedious wars.

How greatly do we stand obliged to God! who hath granted us this fuccess against an enemy, who is so unwearied to bring upon us popery and flavery. Had he now prevailed, his cruelty towards his own protestant subjects (tho' flavishly obsequious and fond of his glory) affures us, what violence, infolence, and spoil must have ensued. Render dutiful thanks to our God, who by this fuccess hath so far difabled our adversary from devouring his neighbours, from extinguishing the Protestant religion, from trampling on the liberties of Europe, and reducing England to that narrow abject state, which the meer performance of the articles agreed to by the late king James would fix us in.

CAN formal heartless thanks become us towards him by whose interposal we have as yet our religion, our liberties, estates and relations continued secure? What can oblige us, if we are not thankful, that the bonour of the nation is preserved, the name of our Queen made great, the way for our confined trade somewhat opened,

and

and so much addition to our fleet and SERM. treasure, by what had been employed IX. to our overthrow? Oh, press on your minds a deep fense of the divine goodness! feel the engaging power of the benefits God hath bestowed; but see that your bearts be thankful, as well as your lips, and instance your sincerity by greater zeal for his glory, love to his name, delight in his service, and all holy obedience to him in your conversation: Vow and pay fuitable returns, both in kind and in degree. Surely he hath intitled himself to a bigber place in our affectionate regards, unless we'll bear the brand of the highest disingenuity, and basest ingratitude. Can we neglect to live his praises, unless we despise these available blessings, the want whereof had overwhelmed us? or that we think, we shall no more stand in any need of his favourable affiftance?

But before I conclude this head, I must put you in mind to consider, that you have another signal mercy added to that of the success of our arms, and which ought to have a place in our thanks-givings, viz. the recovery of his Highness the prince of Denmark, from a dangerous sit of sickness. When he was in danger, he had a share in our prayers, because his death, on several accounts, had been a publick judgment: His prolonged life is a greater blessing, than most apprehend; therefore

IX. thankful; yea, praise and bless the Lord for his recovery; because he supported nature when decay'd, and his blessing gave a healing efficacy to means.

4. ADD joy to your praises and thanks-givings. This is so natural, when providence contributes to our sensible advantage, that there is not so much need to excite our rejoicing, as to regulate and direct it, both as to its degrees, and the considerations, which do most affect us: this as well as other passions being apt to degenerate to what is merely carnal, or to exceed its bounds.

My text mentions a two-fold rejoicing.

(1.) A rejoicing over their ruined enemies.

(2.) A joy, that God had made them to rejoice over their enemies. Consonantly to

this example,

(1.) Rejoice over your baffled enemies. This is lawful as they are the enemies of God, and as far as their evil designs and unjust enterprizes are deseated by the hand of God, in savour of our righteous cause, yea, and of us, who are concerned in that cause. Human bowels are tender to the afflicted; christian charity inclines to yet more compassion, as well as its laws oblige to forgiveness: but the true observance of all these consists well with our joy, at the reduction of our adversaries, as their welfare obstructed a publick

lick good, and their overthrow contribute SERM. to it: Yea, as the justice of God vindi- IX. cates his own and his peoples interest, and his judgments testify the faithfulness of his promises to them, its their duty to rejoice: They shall be as mighty men, which Zach. x. tread down their enemies in the mire of 5, 7. the streets, in battle; and they shall fight, because the Lord is with them, &c. and their heart shall rejoice, as through wine, their children shall see it, and be glad, their heart shall rejoice in the Lord. Nor will this be strange to the most improved faints, in the best state of the christian church, if the triumphant be not intended in that place; Rejoice over ber, thou bea- Rev. xix; ven, ye holy apostles and prophets, for God 20. bath avenged you on ber.

THEREFORE, without any scruple, I call you to rejoice over the baffled forces, and reduced garisons of your enemies: be glad that their ships are seized, their flota, with much of their cargo funk or taken. Rejoice for the blafted hopes of the French King, that check to his ambition, and cloud upon his glory. Rejoice, that God vindicates his persecuted subjects, and testifies his displeasure at his violence.

INDULGE a holy joy, because of his fufferings, as they are means to that good, for which we this day offer thanks to our God; yea, as they are means or presages of further good hereafter. Rejoice, that VOL. II. hereby

IX. rupt men in places of trust by his bribes; less fitted to impede or scant the trade of his neighbours by his force. Let us be glad, that we have any more hopeful prospect of ease to his own Protestant people, barbarously persecuted for so many years; yea, may not we hope a re-settlement of the protestant religion in his kingdom, which would fill our souls with gladness. Rejoice, that his universal monarchy is less probable, and a stop may be put to that ocean of blood he is so earnest to shed for the gratifying of his unsatiable ambition.

How can we but rejoice, and be exceeding glad, that he is less capable to depose our glorious Queen Anne, or interrupt the fuccession of the protestant house of Hanover, on failure of issue by the Queen; both which were unavoidable, if his power were sufficient to force upon us the pretended Prince of Wales, as his vice-roy: the remote supposition whereof fills any mind with horrour, who hath a true zeal for the protestant religion, which is undoubtedly to be facrificed; or for the welfare of his country, already pawned and articled away; or for the innocency of the nation, which must be laden with perjury, whilst they, who fear an oath, and are faithful to their God and national rights, will be fubjected

pifts, and of those more perfidious wretches, IX. who ridicule the obligation of government oaths, even when they qualify themselves for power, by subscribing the abjuration. But to wave further thoughts of a subject, that must damp our joys, otherwise than as this success contributes to the prevention of our feared mischief; once more, I say, rejoice over your weakned enemies, inasmuch as he is less surnished to incourage the dependance of such upon him, who shall be tempted at any time to be false to their religion, or betrayers of their country, in prospect of his supports.

2. Let your chiefest joy be in this, that it is the Lord who made you to rejoice over your enemy: Judah returned with joy, because God had made them to rejoice over their enemy. They are affected, that God was the author of this victory, and not only, that the victory was obtained; that God was so concerned in them, and appeared so wonderfully and immediately in their behalf, enhanched their gladness.

OUGHT not the same disposition to prevail in us, who as much depend upon him, as they could any ways pretend to? Therefore unite your hearts in this refentment. Let us rejoice in God's interposal, as the very heart and substance of the benefits we have received, and the best support of our hopes, as to what

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31, 32.

SERM. good we may hereafter need or expect. IX. We ought the rather terminate our exultings here, because the more God appeared in our fuccess, the more it will be fanctified to us in the event, and the greater likelihood there is of its being perfected.

As it was an encouragement, when we engaged, that we were to encounter a notorious enemy to the interest of God;

Est.vi. 13. fo if a very noted ancient observation hold, when he is begun to decline, he'll fall

Ifa. xxx. fuddenly, fully, and remarkably; for thro' the voice of the Lord shall the Affyrian be beaten down, which beat with the rod, &c. The common doom of persecutors, when they fall into the hands of God, after their inveterate rage is directed by him to vent itself, in correcting his people, in the manner and measure he thinks fittest. But however sovereign wisdom shall adjust that matter, its befitting us to rejoice in all the eminent discoveries of the hand of God, in fighting our battles; for this is a fign, that

Jer. li. 5. our Ifrael bath not been for saken, nor Judah of bis God, of the Lord of bofts; the' the land was filled with fin against the Holy One of Israel. In God's presence among us we have greater cause of joy, than in our victorious foldiers, enriching spoils, or augmented fleet. The divine prefence is the glory and fafety of a nation, this will supply all wants, answer every defect,

fucceed

fucceed the weakest instruments, and strike SERM. a terror into our adversaries, as we find in IX. the verse following my text: And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries, when they heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel: so the realm of Jehoshaphet was quiet. The remaining power of the French is great still, his advantages many, and no doubt we shall hear of vast preparations by fea and land; but we may be free from terror, if God depart not from us; for his presence will defend us against multitudes, and render vain the most formidable strength: Be frong and couragious, be not 2 Chron. afraid or dismayed, for the king of Assyria, xxxi. 7, 8. nor for all the multitude that is with him. for there be more with us, than with him. With him is the arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God, to belp us, and to fight our battles.

It's indeed a wonder of grace, that God, when so highly provoked, should be on our side, we could scarce expect it after our abuse of so many miraculous deliverances, and when our abominations had given him cause, not only to depart from us, but become our enemy. But to our amazement, we find by the manner of our success, that he is still with our forces; he hath not given us a bill of divorce, but tries to oblige us to reformation, by fresh wonders in the beginning

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of

SERM. of the present reign. By these he ac-IX. knowledges us to be yet his people, and the objects of his special care; by these he invites our further trust in him, yea, if we forseit not the relation wherein he

Pf. Ixvii. 6. Stands to us, we may conclude, God, even our own God, shall bless us. We may glory in his perfections, and joyfully triumph in his excellency; for whilst he is with us, all his perfections have their respective influence on our welfare; his wisdom will direct our counsels, and his power will succeed our armies. If he delight to dwell among us, we shall be a blessing to the reformed churches, and a flourishing people at home. O let this be

Isa.xliii.4. the highest accent of our joy, God hath not cast us of, he accepted our prayers, he hath pleaded our cause, we are remarked by his special favour, therein we will, we must rejoice; yea, we will joy and glory in the God of our salvation; and that as

our own God, and our only Saviour.

I HAVE finished both the parts of the doctrine, it remaineth I should make some application; but so much of this kind is included in the duties already mentioned, that I shall add only a few heads, that are obviously inferred from God's being the

author of this fuccess.

## SECT. III.

1. TAKE heed that you abuse not the fuccess which you rejoice in, as the gift of God.

CAN you be glad in this confideration, the most Holy God hath expressed his regard for us, and it is his favour we glory in; and must not a terror form the next thoughts into a refolve against the abuse of his benefits? Dare we so provoke his glory, or abuse his goodness? He is jealous of the frame and behaviour of his people, after he hath done so great things for them; their fins are aggravated when they relapfe, for. at God's expence they serve the devil; and to make their mercies an occasion of any impious course, is to represent God a favourer of rebellion against himself, by putting them into a greater capacity for offending, which all must account a great blasphemy against the wisdom and purity of the divine nature.

We have great cause to suspect our selves, when we know the proneness of degenerate nature, to abuse the benefits which we receive, yea, and find so good a man as feboshaphat to do so, even after this great victory, and the solemn praises recorded in my text. There are three things left as recorded blots upon him, viz. His indulging the bigh places in compliance with the in-

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disposedness

IX.

SERM. disposedness of the people to a perfect reformation; ver. 33. The places were not taken away, for as yet the people had not prepared their hearts unto the God of their fathers. We read, that he had renounced and expelled idolatry, and greatly encouraged the priests and Levites, &c. yea, he removed fuch groves and high places out of Judah, wherein idols were fill worshipped: But the people being fond of the high places, fo adhered to old customs, as to be in danger to leave off the worship of God, unless they might worship him in those high places. Jeboshaphat, though he was too upright a prince to encourage this practice, yet he connived at these places which were appendages of idolatry, and which facilitated the return of it; however indifferent or inconvenient they were esteemed by the people.

Another thing you find, ver. 35. And after this did Jehoshaphat join himself with Ahaziah, king of Israel. He had too great a friendship for one, who was an enemy to the true worship, and who wickedly advanced idolatry (yea, on his death-bedattempted the life of the prophet Elijah.) The power of alliance, ambition, or interest, was great, which could induce him, who had so often promoted reformation, to come so near a relapse into the very fame fin, as God had before fo sharply reproved, faying, Shouldst thou help the un-

2 Chron. xix. 2.

godly,

godly, and love them that bate the Lord? SERM, therefore is wrath upon thee from the Lord. IX. Nay, its aggravated by the late eminent deliverance, which is remarked by those words, after this. But whatever was his temptation to this amity, he meets with a severe rebuke, and so considerable a loss, as should caution against imbarking our interest in the same bottom with any, who are ungodly, and hate the Lord; ver. 37. Then Eliezer prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying; Because thou hast joined thy self with Ahazia, the Lord hath broken thy work, and the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish.

THE other blot recorded, is in the chapter following my text, viz. making his idolatrous fon king, from a zeal for the RIGHT LINE: But the kingdom gave he 2 Chron. to Jehoram, because he was the first-born. xxi. 4. A gift, which proved the ruin of his own family, and of Judab too; of his family; for Jehoram slew all his brethren with the fword, tho' all of them were men better than himself; of Judah, for idolatry was restored, the refugees of Israel, who sled to Judah for religion's fake, were flain, as being most likely to animate the people to the defence of God's worship; and the whole nation was plagued in the loss of part Ver. 10, of their territories, in the infults of their 16, 17. idolatrous enemies, and which was most undoing, in being compelled by this their king,

SERM. king, to fall in with his abominations. Foolish people, if they at first expected better from an idolatrous prince! And Ver. 11. Jehoshaphat was highly blameable, if he had reason to suspect his son's religion; and strange he should not do so, when he was matched with, and under the conduct of the house of Ahab. What this wretched Teboram suffered in his person, in his children, and in his grandchildren, was not only a just vengeance against him, but a testimony also against Jehoshaphat, who feems by his mere donation, if not power, to have made him king against the judgment of those, who defired the succession of some better branch of that royal stem.

CAN our prayers be too fervent, that our victories may not puff us up with pride, as if we had wrought these wonders without God's help, or merited his concurrence by our well-pleasing carriage. Nor is a common jealousy sufficient, least we grow secure and settled on our lees, as if we might fin with impunity, seeing God hath once smiled upon our attempts, and reduced the strength of the most probable instrument to afflict us.

SHOULD it not be also deprecated with the greatest seriousness, that any become encouraged to persecute or irritate each other? which would be at once the grossest abuse of our mercy, and understanding too: Of our mercy, as if God did bless

our united endeavours, in weakning a per-SERM. fecutor abroad, that we might be able, and IX. at leasure to divide and persecute at home: Sure divine benignity is affronted to the height, when its effects are made the engines of malignity and rancour, or any way a motive thereto. But our understanding is no better treated, if we are incited to violences by these successes: For the enemy and his abettors are not so weak, but that they may reduce us to fuch diffrefs, as our nation may be in danger by the incapacity and refentment of the aggrieved; and suppose (as we ought to pray) that no fuch exigence occur, yet persecution must be now the greatest folly, because the end is not defigned, for which it was formerly used as a proper means, i. e. popery and flavery. Yea, as it is vain, so it must be no less fatal to piety, as the preachers will be diverted from what promotes it: To peace, as our minds will be irritated: To trade, as people will be discouraged, spoiled, and men of substance forced abroad, in order to fafety, liberty, and quiet.

Nor can the Protestant religion be secure, when the oppressed part of its strength is made useless; and the oppressing part distinguished by a fiery zeal, not for any Protestant principle, but for things so insignificant, as must narrow its bottom beyond stability in a time of debates, and when tottering, great despair will encline its fall

SERM. to that fide, which is next a-kin only in those points whereto its power was facrificed. O what heart can forbear bleeding, to think how the true Protestant interest will be exposed by violent divisions, when they are so very few among the hottest,

who foresee the turn they serve!

YET, bleffed be God, the name of perfecution is become odious; and, that the thing shall be prevented, we have the royal word of her Majesty, for which we have reason to be greatly thankful, not only for our own fakes, but for the nation's, which can bear no addition to its guilt, nor spare the least degree of utmost endeavours to make it happy.

But to conclude, whatever others do, let not us allow our felves in any evil practice, under the countenance of these fuccesses; for this will desecrate all our bleflings into fnares, and render our mercy

Ezr.ix. 14, a means of severest judgments; After thou hast given us such a deliverance as this, 15. should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with people of thefe abominations, wouldst not thou be angry with us, till thou hadst consumed us, so that there

should be no remnant, nor escaping?

2. Answer the ends for which God hath

wrought thus marvelloufly for us.

Not to abuse our success to ill purposes, is not sufficient, under a trust so capable to be improved. And to imagine either either that God expects not such improve- SERM. ments, or will not animadvert on our IX. omission, is to accuse him of a disregard in what concerns his government over this world; the contrary to which, the most careless shall find to their own ruin; when summoned to give an account of the least Mat. xxv. talent.

An ingenuous thankful mind will fuggest many and great things, as fitly demanded in return for this deliverance. Happy England! if all persons strive to answer God's expectations, in proportion to their ability; some can do much, all may do somewhat. Such as explain God's defign in this providence to the great, no doubt will encourage them to pursue this war, till France be fo reduced, as the ballance of Europe may be secure, and, if possible, the Protestant religion restored there, and established in other places where it's threatned. Nor can they fail to press their hearty endeavours to promote a national reformation of manners, by power and example; as also what other things for God, their influences capacitate them to do, either in church or state; of which kind, the removal of useless things which divide us, is not the leaft.

But my concern is to persuade you to those things which are common to all of us, and they shall be what the Holy Ghost directs in the like case, believe and revere a divine SERM. divine providence. God hath begun to exIX. ecute vengeance on infolent, persecuting blasphemers; is not God's end in this, That man shall say, Verily, there is a God who judgeth in the earth? He hath wrought a great salvation for our land; but to what end doth God exert himself, in the behalf of his people? Hezekiah answers, it is, Isa.xxxvii. That all may know that thou art Lord, even

That all may know that thou art Lord, even thou only. If you review the indication of a providence in our fuccess, which I have already mentioned, an atheist cannot find a cause of any effect, if that had not the ordering of our victory. Learn then to acknowledge God in all your ways, to acquiesce in his disposals, and patiently wait to see the wisdom of those methods, which at first you may not understand.

Josh.xxiii.

AGAIN; God requires, that if he fight for you, you should take beed to your selves, that you love the Lord your God. Benefits engage to love: Let a fense therefore of his goodness unite our hearts to him, and greaten our esteem of him; supremely love him, who is God over all; fincerely love him, whose kindness for us is so fruitful and efficacious. To manifest the fincerity of your love, see that his commandments are not grievous to you, his yoke not uneafy, nor fellowship with him slighted; but that his honour commands your zeal, in his interest you freely embark, at what's offenfive to him you are grieved; his lovingkindness

kindness is better than life to you, and you SERM. daily strive to be more transformed into IX. his likeness.

A FARTHER design of God in his wonderful work, is, That men may set their hope Ps. lxxviii. in God, and not forget his works, but keep 4. bis commandments; and not be as their fa-1xxxvii. 8. thers, a stubborn, rebellious generation. Do not eafily question his help, nor trust in any other: Let not fuch great things flip your mind, nor the due impressions of them wear off, but live under the conduct of his precepts, that you may not put a stop to his working in like manner, whenever you are in the same necessity, which your fathers experienced to their hurt; and therefore you should take warning not to imitate them in ways fo fatal, nor think their custom will be your excuse, or ought to be your rule.

Nor is it less the end of this success, That you cleave unto the Lord your God; Josh.xxiii. for the Lord your God hath driven out great 6, 7 nations from before you, great nations and strong; but as for you, no man hath been able to stand before you to this day. Oh therefore apply your hearts to this, as what God expects! You have experienced his power against popish enemies, shall we ever comply with their errors, or wallow in their abominations? God forbid. Have we any cause to forsake our God, or desert his interest? See we not, that he is as ready,

SERM, as he is able to defend us? But who can skreen us from his wrath, if we provoke him by our apostasy? It's a fearful thing Heb. x. to fall into the bands of the living God. 31. For upon your revolt from him, those perfections which contributed to our prefent fafety, will become engaged in mak-

ing us utterly miserable.

THESE are some of the ends of God. by fuch fucceffes, as we find them explained by his infallible Spirit. If you refuse to answer them, you do what in you lies to defeat God's purposes, as well as disappoint yourselves of the best part of the mercy, viz. your spiritual and eternal advantage by it. You'll also find these great successes will testify against you, and what you now remember with joy, you must review with shame and bitterness. Neither, if you neglect to comply with these ends of God, which respect duty on our part, shall you find comfort in those ends, which God, on his part, will effectually accomplish. Whether these be terrible or favourable to his churches, is a fecret with himself: But be that as he pleafeth, this fuccess against outward adversaries, may also direct us to fight against our spiritual enemies, and that with affuring hope, because the grace 2 Cor. xii. of Christ is sufficient for us; and we are

more than conquerors, through him that loved us; which if experienced in the forest temp-

tations

tations and trials, exceeds all other victories, SERM. and will be matter of eternal praise. IX.

3. Be asraid lest we forfeit the presence

of God with our armies.

THE departure of God is what we have reason to fear, for that will not only put a stop to our advances, but blast that success for which we are offering our praises: We are ready to say, Thou hast made our moun-Psal. xxx. tain to stand strong; but know, that's as true which follows, Thou didst hide thy face, and I was moved. When the mere hiding of his face will have such an effect, what more dismal things will ensue his forsaking a people? For the greatest darkness and desolation supply his absence, and nothing shall be more feelingly confess'd by us, than the force of that denunciation, Wo also to Hos. ix. them, when I depart from them.

IF, by our offences, our condition prove thus miserable, our victorious foldiers will Ps. lxxviii. become cowards, like the children of E-9. phraim, who, being armed, and carrying Jer.xxxvii bows, turned back in the day of battel. Our 10. stoutest generals will be as women, our wifest counsellors will become fools, our enemies, though never so weak, will serve to baffle us; Though ye fight with the Chal- Ch.xxxvii. deans, you shall not prosper. When God 10. departs from us, as his ordinances will have no good effect on the state of our fouls, so his providence will act in a contrariety to our temporal welfare; we shall not only VOL. II. want

SERM. want its aid, but we must undergo those IX. defeats, disappointments, and vexatious confusions, which the terror of the Almighty will produce.

ENGLAND'S All is in God's power, for be can help, or cast down; and as he favours or frowneth, as he is near or asar off, our case will be determined. Therefore that solemn caution to Israel, ought to be re-

Josh.xxiii. garded by us; If ye in any wise go back, 12,13,16. know for a certainty, the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, &c. Whilst God is with us, we shall find prosperity in our affairs; but when he removes, our defence, our guide, our glory, is departed from us; then we shall be contemptible abroad, and a terror to ourselves at home. As therefore you have any regard for yourselves, for the nation, and for posterity, avoid those things which provoke God to leave a nation, and be intent on such ways as will secure his presence.

A SERMON



## A SERMON occasioned by the Death of the Reverend Mr. JOHN QUICK.

Preached May 7. 1706.

Тов ііі. 17.

There the wicked cease from troubling; there the weary is at rest.



N inordinate love of this pre- SERM. fent life, and too strong an aversion to death, are too common, fince the entrance of fin. To allay both, the all-wife

providence allots us many weaning exercifes whilst we live, and a future release therefrom by death; whereby death is rendred more desirable than life itself. Holy Job expresseth this in a lively manner in my text. And they will appear to be words of truth and soberness, tho' utter'd in a paroxism; wherein the extremity of his trial often appears above that patience, for which he is so eminent in sacred records.

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I SHALL

## Sermon on the Death of

SERM. I SHALL confider,

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X.

1. THE state to which Job refers.

2. THE privileges of persons in that state.

## SECT. I.

1. The state he refers to. The state of the dead is expressed metonimically by the adverb there. It's in the grave where he reckons on such immunities, ver. 22. They are glad when they can find the grave; that is, be with the dead, as ver. 13, 14. he reckons then he had been at rest. Parallel to this, we commonly distinguish the living and the dead, by saying, the former are on this side the grave, the latter are in or on the other side of the grave. Strictly, the body is in the grave, the soul beyond it; but the whole man is in the state of the dead.

2. The privileges of the dead. These are expressed in two parts: The wicked cease from troubling; the weary are at rest. The former limits the evil from which we are freed, by the instruments inslicting it; and so it points only to such hardships as the unjust do occasion or procure. The latter is more comprehensive; for as the word weary enlargeth the kind and causes of affliction, beyond those to which the wicked are accessaries, so to be at rest, signifies a further relief than a mere freedom from

the

the trouble to which the wicked do con- SERM. tribute. Yea, this rest, by a meiosis, con- X. notes a greater good than a period to wea- riness.

BEFORE I proceed to improve this subjects, it's necessary to answer this question.

Quest. Do these words assure a redress and rest by death to all men who are troubled and weary, or only to righteous men?

Answ. 1. As to appearance to such as survive, they refer to all men, and in some

respect they are true of such.

WHEN the worst man dies, he seems to survivors to be released from what they observed grievous to him whilst he lived, for what's lest of him is insensible, and what's departed cannot express its moans to our hearing; so that he seems to be at rest. And he is indeed so in sundry respects; for his body, for a time, is freed from all torment; the whole man is out of the reach of surviving enemies, as to any present hurt from them, and all the afflictions and labours belonging to this lower state of life, are at a period.

Answ. 2. The mentioned relief by death is in reality, as to what's most important, properly only to the righteous man. It's only he whom the wicked shall trouble no more; whereas sinners, in the other world, will meet with wicked men to trouble them; they shall mutually torment each

M<sub>3</sub> other.

X. reflecting on the influence their companions had on their ruin, by folliciting them to offend, will be enraged against them; and that rage will vent itself as far as they are capable; whilst the punishments of both are heightned for that hand they had in the tempting each other to that finful course, which ends in this misery. Some think it was to prevent this trouble by his brethren, that the rich man was so defirous of their

conversion, Luke xvi. 27.

THE godly person also will be the only man at rest in the unseen state; for the wicked, inflead of being at rest, do, by death, enter into far heavier and more difquieting mifery; and they are excluded from all refreshment. The foul sleeps not, but is in anguish beyond what was possible to be felt on earth. It's quick reflections on his past guilt and folly (with the powerful impressions of divine wrath) will make him the tormented expectant of the refurrection, when the compleat misery of the whole man is to take place. This is proved by the scope of the parable just mentioned, Luke xvi. For as ver. 19 to 25. teach us, that rich men are in danger of hell, and fure to be there intolerably tormented, if they abuse their riches, or are content with them as their portion; and, ver. 26. shews us the unalterable endless misery of such as are in hell: So ver. 27, 28, 29, 30, 31. do evidence

when separated from the body. For as X. the rich man's plea is after death, so it is before the resurrection; seeing his brethren were still alive on earth, and in a state of trial for eternity, as well as under sufficient means for their improvement.

THERE's no danger of mistaking the emblems in the other parts of the parable, which are accommodated to what the body is to endure when re-united; but if it be an error, that the separate soul reflects with grief foon after death, I'm fure these words of Christ plainly lead men to think it, for they represent the rich man to do so just upon his death, and before a change is made in his family by the death of any of his brethren. They must think unworthily of the goodness, truth, and wisdom of Christ, who suspect he can so far countenance a false doctrine in a point relating to the unfeen state, especially when all clear and fure notices of that state must be owing to revelation; and Sadduces were com-

IF any object the design of this part of the parable is to prove, that if Moses and the prophets are ineffectual to reform men, one sent from the dead would have no better success. I answer, That is not the whole design; but if it were, yet our Saviour would not introduce this by afferting a false principle, viz. that the departed

mon among his hearers.

M 4 foul

SERM. fouls of the wicked do with grief act and reflect; for if this were not a truth, he had used otherways to vindicate Moses and the prophets from infufficiency, than to affirm that messengers from the dead are not more apt means for conversion. Christ should do thus much to mislead us. is far less probable, than that Paul would judge the fleeping of a good man's foul after death, was both a being with Christ, and far better than fo useful a life as his; yea, and persuade the Philippians of his great felf-denial in being content to live, when his labours were so necessary to the church, and advantageous to the interest of the Lord Jesus, Phil. i. 22, 24.

I shall therefore confine this text to the righteous, as to the chief consequences of death; nor could Job intend it concerning all men, otherwise than in my first answer to the question; for he often shews, that the wicked are in a wretchedly grievous state upon their dying, Job xxi. 20. and ch. xx. 5, 6, 30. and asserts his own felicity after death, upon assurance of his being an upright man, Job xix. 25, 27. and

xiv. 14, 15.

We are to confider righteous men in a twofold state, living and dead; one dark, and the other bright and comfortable. Both of these have two parts answering each other.

righteous are troubled by the wicked, and X. also weary.

2. In the state of the dead, the righteous are no longer troubled by the wicked; and they are at rest from all their weariness.

How great a difference! how bleffed an iffue! fince their grievances are as *short* as life, and the redress not only perfect, but everlasting! Death indeed stands between these great extremes, and by divine constitution is the ordinary passage from one condition to the other; on which account the godly man is reconciled to it, tho' in itself repugnant to nature. The whole matter of the text will be comprehended under these four observations.

I. Observ. THE wicked cause much trouble to the godly in this life.

II. Observ. DEATH will put an end to all those troubles which the godly suffer by wicked men.

III. Observ. THE best and most active saints may, in this life, be weary.

IV. Observ. WEARY saints, when they are dead, shall be at rest.

I. Observ. The wicked cause much trouble to the godly in this life. They are thorns in their sides, and by their means many are distressed: They would bring calamities

12, 13.

SERM. calamities on all upright persons, and heigh-X. ten those which any endure, if God did not It's more from want of restrain them. power than will, that any escape. Unless providence fo over-rule affairs, that it becomes their own interest to deal more gently, their very mercies would be cruelty. They cause trouble to the righteous two ways.

1. By the malignity of wicked men, the

godly often fuffer perfecution.

2. FROM zeal for God, and love to fouls, the righteous feel much grief by the noto-

1. By the malignity of wicked men, the godly often fuffer persecution. Their

rious transgressions of the wicked.

innate enmity against God's image, incline John iii. them to hate and oppress the saints: Cain flew his brother, because his works were righteous: And thence you are commanded, not to marvel that the world hates you. By their number and strength they are generally capable to injure them; and when God, for wife ends, takes away his restraints, how cruelly do they exert the instances of their wrath? They disturb them by their railing scoffs, blast their names by flanders, bereave them of their estates, abridge them in their civil rights, forbid them religious exercises, cast them into prisons, torment their bodies, yea, spare not their lives, which in all places have been a facrifice to their rage; and this to fuch a degree,

that

that even the Romish church is said to be SERM. drunken with the blood of the saints. Mere X. dying will not appease, all kinds of torments are invented, that they may feel 6. themselves die; of which we have instances in the late barbarities in France, as well as former usages, wherein Papists have equal'd the cruelty of the most savage Pagans.

THE fervants of Christ can attempt nothing for his interest, wherein the wicked do not oppose them; and the more useful any are found to be, the greater effects of hatred must such expect at these mens hands. They stop the mouths of faithful ministers; yea, this malignity is so powerful, that it will break forth in persons whose character is most facred, rather than good men shall not be filenc'd. Amazia the priest, when his complaints to Feroboam against Amos, as a conspirator, had gain'd a commission, soon tells him, O thou Amos vii, Seer, go, flee thee away into the land of 10, 12. Judah, but prophely not any more at Bethel, for it is the king's chapel. apostles are by the high-priests and elders commanded not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus. To sum up the various ways of persecution is impossible; our large martyrologies can describe but a small part of ill mens contrivances to suppress the fervants of the living God. See in 2 Cor. xi. 23, 24, &c. with what variety one apostle is exercised.

SERM. 2. FROM a zeal for God, and love to fouls, the righteous feel much grief by X. the notorious transgressions of the wicked. Pfal. exix. David is not alone in faying, I beheld 136, 158. the transgressors, and was grieved: Rivers of waters run down my eyes, because men keep not thy law. For it must grieve all good men, to fee their bleffed God affronted, his holy laws violated, and his facred authority trampled on by profligate 2 Pet. ii. wretches: the foul of righteous Lot was 7, 8. vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. That man's fincerity is justly queftionable, who can unconcernedly behold notorious wickedness; for a cordial, affectionate reverence for God must excite a

deep indignation against such things: Neither are the compassions of saints to mankind fo restrained, as to make light of their offences. They cannot without fadness behold those atrocious crimes, whereby they debase the glory of the human nature, and destroy themselves. They fee the vengeance which waits them, and knowing it's terrible, fure, and near, charity puts them on bemoaning the difmalness of their case. And it's no small aggravation to the grief of a righteous man, that finners do not only heap mischief on themselves, but they corrupt others by their evil example and thereby expose them to the like destruction.

MOREOVER, it often happens, that

good men are sharers in those publick SERM. judgments which God inflicts on societies X. for the provocations of the wicked. Daniel, and other holy men became captives with their sinful nation; and such endure troubles of several kinds, procured by the crimes of notorious transgressors.

On such accounts as these it may be expected, that good men do not only endeavour the reformation of the wicked, but complain as troubled persons at what they are unable to redress. Such cries are familiar; Wo is me, that I live in Mesech,

that I dwell in the tents of Kedar.

Ist Infer. From this last we may infer, the tempers of the godly and the wicked are extremely contrary. The wicked mock at the sins which the righteous bewail: those boast of what these lament, Prov. xiv. and are ashamed in their behalf, though themselves be innocent thereof. Those despise their own danger, whilst the righteous pity them, and strive to prevent it, by warnings, intreaties, example, prayers, and tears. The followers of Christ are willing to suffer for such things, the wicked think so evil, as to render them deserving the worst of deaths.

Surely the fame heaven or hell cannot be the abode of fuch opposites. Nor is that less than a new creation, which so changeth the godly from what he was by nature, as well as the worst offenders.

The

X. very contrary, which govern the ftated defigns and course of men in such a general opposition. Light and darkness, divine and devilish, life and death, spirit and slesh, rational and brutish, are but some of the terms by which the Holy Ghost expressent this contrariety. Therefore let the worst of you pray for convincing light, to see this difference, and for that regenerating efficacy of the Spirit, which only

can make this great and needful alteration. 2d Infer. ACTIVE faints have no cause to wonder at the troubles they meet with This I infer from the from wicked men. first head. It may appear strange to such as confider only the excellency of a righteous man. These are apt to think, how is it possible such a person can meet with contempt and hatred, when the image of God upon him is fo lovely? Who can be fo ill-natur'd as to perfecute one whose carriage is fo harmless and winning? What devils must they be, who can attempt the hurt of one so useful to themfelves and neighbourhood? often diverting the temporal judgments they are pulling on their own heads, and still heartily intent to bring them to Christ, that they also may obtain eternal falvation? Sure this good man hath fuch a testimony in their own consciences, that when they attempt

attempt to injure him, it's with great re- SERM. X.

the disposition of the wicked, you'll change your mind, and not reckon that caution needless, think it not strange concerning 1 Pet. iv. the fiery trial, as if some strange thing happen'd to you: For it is a very common thing; and the spring of persecuting rage is no secret, but easily accounted for. Let us but examine the condition the wicked are in, as to their nature, conduct, and resentments, then our wonder must cease: for all that which pleads for the believer's security, is overcome by what is more powerful in the ungodly. In them,

(1.) A CARNAL nature prevails, which includes an antipathy against Christ and his people. Our Lord declares this, when he forewarns his members; because you John xv. are not of this world, but I have chosen 18. you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Every age gives instances of this, as then he that was born after the Gal. iv. flesh, persecuted him that was born after 29. the Spirit, so it is now. The old enmity is propagated between the two feeds, as contrary natures: The holy cannot love the wicked, as they are wicked; nor the wicked love the holy, as they are holy. There is indeed great difference between these two, in expressing their hatred. When the godly man hates the wicked, tho' Pf.cxxxix. he 21.

SERM. he abhors fin, he loveth what of God's X. image remaineth in them; tho' he de-Vights not in their company, he will not injure their persons, nor on any private account envy their welfare, but rejoice in it: tho' he useth just means to restrain their sin and mischievousness, he truly pitieth them, and endeavours their conversion.

> But the wicked's enmity hurrieth them to the basest methods of injury, and to implacable defires of the destruction of godly men. It is with difgust they behold any of them prosper; yea, often the bonds of nature cannot prevail to spare their next relations; and they become cruel to their most beloved, as

foon as the grace of God appears.

(2.) Besides the power of malignant nature, the devil has a great interest in wicked men, which he employs to the same persecuting designs. He excites their rage, and makes use of them as instruments to plague the godly: Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison: Not immediately, but by the hands of fuch powerful ones as were under his influence. Our bleffed Redeemer, as head of the church, is engaged in a stated war against Satan; the righteous make up those armies which Rev. xix. follow Christ. The wicked are lifted on the devil's side, tho' they know it not;

Rev. ii.

by the access he hath to their imagi- SERM. nations, he fuggests both motives and oc- IX. casions; and by the power of their own lufts, which he stirs up, he easily leads them to fuch outrages, as nature startles at in the beginning. With Hazael they'll perpetrate that which at first hearing made him say, Is thy servant a dog? Did persecutors know whose suggestions they obey (though taken for their own reasonings) they wou'd startle, and not yield themselves to be the devil's tools. But they fee not their leader, because their own lusts encline them to approve his cause; and are fo refolved in the quarrel under his conduct, that perfecuting empires are called by his name, dragon, fatan, and devil.

3. THE righteous are a torment to evil men. These see their own wickedness reproached by the holy lives of pious men; in that brightness their crimes appear the blacker; and their consciences are often awakened to judge themselves criminals, because the remains of light in them approve the practices of faints, as more lawful, fafe, and excellent. The testimony which the righteous give for God and holiness, gauls offenders, because it's a direct fentence against their temper and behaviour, as contrary to God, and unholy. The faints are obliged to reprove transgresfors, whilst there's any hope of amendment. By fuch reproofs they are VOL. II. N disquieted,

Rev.xii.9.

X.

Mark vi. 19, 28.

SERM. disquieted, and their secure ease in ways of fin being interrupted, they are filled with rage, if resolute in holding on their course. John must die, that Herodias may be quietly incestuous. Lawful attempts for reformation are the duty of all, and good men heartily engage therein. Now nothing more provokes the vile: the very prospect of any success in church or state vexeth their very foul; for reformation is a restraint on sin, which they love most; and a promoting of godliness, which they can least endure. This is the very reason of their utmost endeavours to keep all good men out of power in the state, and place in the church.

SET these three points together, and you'll not wonder that much trouble comes to the righteous; but be rather amazed that one of them is any where fecure, or in any moment fafe and easy. Ordinarily they have power as well as inclination to extirpate the church, which is too weak to defend it felf against such a number of mighty ones, who scruple nothing. must therefore be the almighty arm to which its defence is owing; and by a special favour of providence that our tranquil-

Rev. xi. 3. lity is fo great, when the witnesses are in fackcloth for most ages. Yet the present case should not prevent your expectation of troubles, perhaps the unactive may escape them, as less observed; but the

eminent

eminent active christian is foolish, if hard-SERM. Ships surprize him, unprepared to bear X. them. Especially when, besides all you have heard, our Saviour tells us, In the John xvi. world you shall have tribulation.

II. Observ. Death will put an end to all those troubles which the godly suffer by wicked men. Then will those words be sulfilled in the highest manner, They Ezek xviii shall no more be a pricking briar, nor a 24-grieving thorn. The release will be soon and perfect, and 'twill be thus secured.

1. The wicked will then be unable to hurt the godly. The fore things they had inflicted, will be entirely removed. For their reproaches will be wiped off by the acquitting sentence of Christ their judge. All their losses be made up by immense treasures. A lost life shall be found in a more excellent manner, and abundantly more improved. The full rewards which Mat. xix. they inherit, shall blot out the bitter re-29 membrance of whatever they felt of man's Luke ix. severity.

As to any further troubles, there's no hazard; for they will be far out of the reach of the wicked's power. Shou'd these rail, it's barking at the moon. Shou'd they hang out their naked carcasses, it's but exposing their own barbarity; for they feel nothing, and Christ will raise them in a glory like his own. Righteous men are Phil. iii. lodged in chambers, where the persecutor 21.

N 2 hath

X. them, his utmost force can have no effect.

He may by fretting, torment himself; but their welfare is not in the least to be interrupted or impaired.

2. The godly man shall be so fat of one mind with God, that the misery of the wicked shall cause in him no tormenting

pity.

In the future state, the sinner will be finful and exquisitely miserable, and the faints shall know it; yet this shall not diminish the satisfaction of the blessed. For the vengeance inflicted by God shall so fubdue his enemies, and vindicate his authority, that their fins can be no dishonour to God in the esteem of any obferver; for they are but the desperate ravings of executed outlaws, past their state of trial. Tho' obedience is their duty (and ever will be so as creatures) yet it will not be accepted, no, nor is it demanded as a condition of any benefits to subjects of divine government. God's fentence hath taken place, and they express such a sense of what they feel, as will make his law honourable beyond the least blot by their malignity: for the fins they can commit, yield no pleasure to them, who have no fuel to any luft, except what their torments contribute.

Nor yet will the extremest torments of the wicked move any uneasy pity, because every every faint will be convinced that these are SERM. the just effects of the irreclaimable obsti-X. nacy of men, fixed in their enmity against Christ, and in a chosen combination with devils to dethrone him, had they power; yea, willing to repeat their villanies, were

they capable.

THE actings of charity in our present state can scarce admit such a restraint of bowels; but the proceedings of Christ on his tribunal will assure us, the sorest part of his sentence is so equal, that less wou'd not instance his justice, vindicate his honour, or secure the glory of his government: And we shall be so united to our lord in interest, light, love, will, and enjoyment, that we shall not only not regret at what makes for his glory, but approve of it, and rejoice therein.

I SHALL apply this observation, (1.) To

the wicked. (2.) To the godly.

(1.) This truth improved will induce your compliance with a two-fold exhortation. O wicked ones!

1. SEE your folly in persecuting the saints. Is it not madness to prepare suel for your own destruction, by attempting what you cannot effect? You can accomplish your evil design neither against the righteous, nor against that for which you hate them. The image and interest of Christ will prevail, his testimony in their hands shall obtain; yea, and your selves

14.

SERM. be forced to contribute to the honour thereof, by fuffering for your prefent opposition. You'll see the truth of that text, and might observe that it's self-evident;

Rev. xvii. These shall make war with the lamb, and the lamb shall overcome them: For he is King of kings, and Lord of lords; and they that are with him are called, and chosen,

and faithful.

As to what trouble you have put any believers to, it was fanctified to them whilft obnoxious; they are rewarded for those very afflictions, and it's but a little time and you shall be unable to touch them: Nay, that morning (of the refurrection at

Pfal, xlix, farthest) is hastening, when the righteous shall have dominion over the greatest of you. They who are gone, look down upon you with contempt, and fee the time of vengeance approaching. Be wife therefore,

Acts ix. 5. and stop your vain attempts: Why will you kick against the pricks? They will wound you, but you cannot hurt them. You will acknowledge it folly to burn eternally in hell, for the short satisfaction of venting your enmity against the saints a few days on earth. This is your case.

> 2. BE convinced of the wretchedness of your future state, as it will be unpittied

by your nearest relations.

Prous friends and relatives now weep over you, pray for you, and expose themfelves to your fcorn, by striving to pluck

you as brands out of the burning. But if SERM. you proceed in your contempt of Christ, X. and finally reject his calls; as you'll find him an inexorable judge when he paffeth fentence, fo your very parents, as well as other faints, will witness against you; they shall join with Christ in his sentence, when the faints do judge the world. Even i Cor. vi. they will press the charge, and plead the 2. equity of your condemnation, as Abraham did against his own offspring, who is represented to fay, Son, remember that thou Luke xvi. in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, 25. and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. Nor shall they shed a tear for all thy weeping, wailing, and gnashing thy teeth for ever. Good ministers, who at present so lay your cafe to heart, as to press you with all importunity, and your obstinate refufals force them to many groans and tears, they shall then triumph in Christ, as a 2 Cor. ii. Sweet Savour to God in you that perish, 14,15,16. tho' a savour of death unto death unto all such. Must not you judge your wilful malignity to be fixed and inveterate, and your provocations high, that can extinguish all pity towards you in persons when perfected in love; and prevent all compassions even in those who wou'd once have died to fave you, and could not behold you in the least distress without bitter forrows? O at last think with your selves, believe N 4 what

9.

SERM. what you shall find true, and tremble at what's fo awful, and is your own case too! If by any means this mifery may be prevented, as it certainly may, if you obey the call of Christ, which as yet is backed with your friends concerned intreaties. But pray remember, this feafon of your hope, and their importunity, will foon be at an end, and cease for ever. When Christ delivers up his kingdom upon the judgment-day, there can be no dispenfation to give you hope.

2d. Exhort. is directed to such of you

as are truly godly.

I. BE reconciled to sufferings, from a joyful hope of being shortly beyond all

IT should make you patient who now

hurt by wicked men.

endure most; that it's but a little while and they'll vex you no more. You'll be freed from their infults, and separated from their company, which you often defire in Pfal. xxvi. that petition, Gather not my foul with finners, nor my life with bloody men. arm shall fail, and their craft and power be too mean to affect you. Despise their reproaches, which they must be ashamed of. Bear their opposition, for you'll soon be at liberty to do the Lord's work without danger, and proclaim his praises with-

out controul. Fret not at the injuries you

2 Cor. iv now endure; they are what you need whilest imperfect, they work for you a far

faints have patiently endured them, strong X. faints have rejoiced and gloried in them. Scan By them your fidelity to Christ is inAtanced, and his interest maintained and Rom.v.3. promoted. Nor is it long before satur Rom. xvi. and all his persecuting instruments shall 20. be bruised under your feet. And your exaltation be the object of their fretting envy.

HAPPY martyrs! who move in an orb fo much above their tyrannical perfecutors! With what contempt do those look down on these oppressing huffs? for as they seel no smart by what they endured, and are safe from all sear of their returns, so they reap the greatest advantages by what these men intended for their hurt: And behold them vexing themselves to basten their own woe, whilst they think to make the godly miserable.

TAKE up your cross with a ready, composed, and resolute mind. The worst can be done to you, will but translate you to share in the triumphs of all those, who are dead in the Lord. O may my lot be among the most oppressed saints, rather than the highest monarchs, whose hand is against the righteous.

2. WITH patience and pity wait for the conversion of the worst sinners, during this time of life.

X. grace, as St. Paul did, therefore pray for them who despitefully use you. Or if you are concerned with obstinate persons, who have long resisted the Spirit, and despised your reproofs, you should double your pains, and not conclude their case hope-

Mat. xx.6. less; for some come in at the eleventh hour. But, say you, they are judicially hardned; yet that's more than you know, and they may be so in part, and not altogether; and for a time, and yet not finally. Therefore as whilst God spares

Rom.ii.4. them, his goodness leads them to repentance; fo you ought to concur with him by all just endeavours; and not indulge neglects by such excuses. Nor is it proper to object, that their day of grace is over; for it's never in this life so over with any, as that his true repentance shall not prove saving to him; or to exempt you from doing what you can to bring them to it. God's secret purpose not to give grace, is not your rule, for that's unknown; and he hath made it your duty, whilst life continues, to persist in prayer and other appointed means.

THEREFORE let not enthusiastick perfuasions, sloth, passion, or despair, abate your industry, nor weaken prayer; which ought to grow *more* fervent, as the symptoms of the sinners appear more dangerous. Neither because your labours succeed not,

let

let your compassion abate, or your bowels SERM. of pity harden: For tho' in the other world, these will be extinguished by a zeal for God, yet in this world, by true christian charity and humanity, they must be cherished; for now their wickedness is not so consummate, nor their case so hopeless as after death. And our love is to be exercised here according to the light, calls, occasions, and quality of objects in our present state. Our Saviour, on Luke xix. earth, wept over obdurate Jerusalem. Paul 41. often blames the unbelieving Jews as the worst of sinners, and yet for the most hardned of them, he had great heaviness, and Rom. ix. continual forrow in his heart, and could2, 3. even wish himself accursed.

## SECT. II.

III. Observ. The best and most active saints may, in this life, be weary. Few go to heaven before they are weary; all have cause to be so with respect to some burden or other; and some are so tired, that they can scarce wait their appointed time. I shall reduce the causes of good mens weariness to two heads.

1. THEY are weary of their pain.

2. THEY are weary in their labours.

painful or tormenting. How many several ways are they afflicted? and by each their pilgrimage becomes tedious. Some

24.

SERM. are visited with severe diseases and bodily X. pains, under which they frequently cry out, with David, Heal me, for my bones are vexed; I am weary with my groanings:

All the night I water my couch with my

Isaxxviii tears. And Hezekiah; I reckoned till morn12, 14. ing, that as a lion so be will break all my

bones. I did mourn as a dove; O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me. Acute difeases often return, and chronical ones often continue long; so that their comforts are disrelish'd, and their days are filled with anguish. What do many endure by the gout, stone, strangury, &? If the body is in health, the plague of their own heart puts them to cry, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of

puts them to cry, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Remains of sin, and the violent workings and sad effects thereof, are more grievous to a tender heart, than the forest maladies; nor can they be easy under strong temptations. How are they pained when scorched by the fiery darts of satan? They are not insensible of wants, losses, unkindness of friends, death of relations, and disappointments; all which make impressions on human nature.

THERE are other fore evils which are yet more afflictive to the righteous. Some are press'd with doubts of their interest in Christ, which they are most concerned to secure; others, whilst they bewail their distractions in duties, and weakness of their

graces,

graces, they delight in the light of God's SERM. countenance above all the pleasures of sense; X. and yet this is not only hid from them, but (which puts them in the greatest agony) his arrows stick fast in them, his hand Ps.xxxviii. presset them sore; there's no soundness in 2, 3, 8. their sless, because of his anger: They roar because of the disquietness of their heart. His frowns affright them, his displeasure is as the breaking of their bones, and makes the least affliction intolerable.

Bur besides the pain they are put to by their personal concerns, they suffer much on the account of others. No small torments feize their minds when they fee their brethren persecuted, the ministry despised, the church of Christ declining in her interest, and her enemies prosperous on her ruins. How often is it, that grief embitters their fouls, upon beholding the divifions, disorders, confusions, miscarriages, and follies among good men? Nor is it feldom that even by these men they meet with hardships. Under such painful exercifes, faints have been weary of their crying. Pfal. lxix. And though submissive as to any repinings 3. against God, yet that they faint not, is owing to fresh supports from above.

2. SAINTS are often weary in their laborious work. The work of every christian is laborious, and requires the utmost diligence, watchfulness, and industry. It's compared to exercises which are tiresome,

and

SERM. and wherein strength is laid out to the utX. most; as running a race for a prize, wrestling, sighting, I Cor. ix. Phil. iii. He who is remiss, lazy, and unactive in such matters, cannot succeed. Our Redeemer, with

Matt. xi. respect to this, assures us, that the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. The attempt is high, the obstacles many, our indispositions great, the benefit in prospect glorious, unsuccessfulness destructive, and the things to be performed are supernatural. This general

are fcarcely faved. And the most vigorous efforts are not needless; yea, the least relax-

ation is dangerous.

WHAT one part of a godly man's exercife is not laborious? The right performance of every duty tries his utmost strength. This you'll find in keeping up a holy fervour in prayer, especially when answer is delay'd: In heart-affecting meditation, efpecially when the thoughts are apt to wander: In subduing the appetite, if agreeable objects are presented. Are not the godly exercised, when mortifying the most beloved luft, forgiving enemies, redeeming time, directing their ends aright, judging and improving opportunities for fervice, and managing their thoughts regularly, and to the utmost profit, as occasions require? Do they find it easy to fill up common stations in proportion to their trust and talents?

talents? to live by faith, to regulate their SERM. affections, and in every thing deny them—X. felves? These may seem easy to such as make no trial; but as all this is but part of the believer's duty, so every true believer is employed herein; and from his own experience can testify the work requires constant supplies from Christ, to keep him from sinking, and enable him to persevere therein.

THE ministers of the gospel (besides what is common to all the godly) stand obliged by their office to a heavier burden, and yet harder work than any fort of men. This the most eminently qualified apostle felt to be so weighty, as to exclaim, Who is 2 Cor. ii. sufficient for these things? Close study is 16. Eccles, xii, tiresome to the flesh. It's hard work to 12. know the extent and nature of their duty, and much harder fo to perform it, as to fulfil their ministry. They have great variety of business, publick and private (besides what concerns the fitting themselves for it) every part whereof is difficult, because they must manage each in the greatest aptitude to the spiritual benefit of all, where yet the diversity of tempers and other circumstances are fo very great. They meet with the greatest opposition from satan and wicked men, and are marked for censure in all they do. Upon many other accounts, he who best knew their toil, calleth them labourers, Luke x. 2. People need not make their

SERM. their work harder, nor their burden heavier; for all the help God gives in, and the greatest

encouragement men afford, are little enough to support them, especially when their people are unfruitful, flighty, and peevifh; or when age and diseases impair their vivacity

and strength.

Ist Exhort. TAKE heed of fretting, when pain is most grievous. At such times be Luke xxi. watchful, that in patience you possess your fouls. God expects not an apathy, when the body is tormented; yet then it is your duty to fanctify God in your bearts, and prevent repinings. The body must not direct your clamours, as if you had no foul to manage it, or that you had loft all power over your fouls. Pains are what your frail constitution exposeth you to, and justly attend this finning life. It's unreasonable to defire a long life, and yet repine that you tafte the dregs of age: For these are natural, and also common, to the best men; must miracles exempt you?

> AGAIN; Do not you find painful difeafes necessary? Unmindfulness of death is a friend to spiritual sloth; this sloth is a great enemy to foul-improvements; and how hard is it for him to have a lively fense of death, who is never fick? Such indeed have cause to be thankful for so easy a pilgrimage; but to most men it is not safe. Many good men find reason to bless God for violent pains, and dangerous distempers;

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19.

these have been means to discover and sub- SERM. due their fins; by these they have become weaned from this world, and prepared for a better. If you find this good effect (as you may do) why should you repine? The means, tho' painful, are far more than ballanced by spiritual advantages. Therefore tho' the body groan, let your foul be quiet; and the rather, for by quietness of mind you'll be more capable to use your pains to spiritual benefit.

Nor to be grieved for our own fins, and those of others too, and afflicted for all spiritual judgments on ourselves, and for the diffresses of the church, is wicked stupidness: Therefore such holy pain is ground of thankfulness (as it argues life) tho' the occasion is afflictive. Yet even in such cases you must justify God, adore his providence, composedly attend to his voice, and apply yourselves to proper means of redress; all which a disturbed frame of fpirit will hinder.

2d Exhort. Faint not under the hardest labour. There is a weariness which is irkfome, and yet innocent, because it's the effect of a labour beyond our strength. Such an indisposition from weakness, when the mind is willing, is not always faulty, tho' troublesome. But there is a weariness which is finful, and often forbidden, as when it proceeds from a diffike of duty:

Ye said also what a weariness is it; and you Mal. i. 13. VOL. II. Inuffed .

SERM. fnuffed at it, faith the Lord of hosts; and ye X. brought the blind, and the lame, and the fick. Or when it makes us intermit and neglect duty; this we are warned of: Be not weary in well doing. The former spoils our duty as to acceptance, because it's not our best, but is next to none; the latter very usually follows, for he that thro' contempt, long offers the blind and lame to God, will at last think him worthy of nothing. This weariness I call you to resolve and pray against; and you must by grace

Gal. vi. 9. be kept from it, or lose the reward: You shall reap if you faint not; which includes, that if you thus faint, you shall not reap. Dreadful also is the account you shall give of your talents, if laziness hinder the em-

ploying them in appointed fervice.

THEREFORE omit not any duty, tho' indisposed through weakness: And that you may not neglect it altogether, cherish such a liking of God's service, as shall make you always perform it in the best manner you are able. In all acts of worship let God have the utmost you can render; for this he deserves, demands, and will, thro' Christ, accept, tho' it be small. In all labours for God, see that conscience can testify, I would do more, and all much better, if I were able. That none of you, but especially ministers, may be remis,

(1.) OFTEN plead with yourselves the nature of the work. It's of the highest

kind;

kind; it's what God commands, what the SERM. Lord Jesus was employed in; his interest is ferved thereby; you'll review it with peace; it can't turn to your shame or loss; angels are not above it; the truest honour confifts therein, and from this the richest benefits will accrue to others, as well as

yourselves.

(2.) URGE on your hearts the just claim Christ hath to your best service. To him you owe your being, by him you were purchased when worse than nothing, (if the utmost misery can make you such:) You are bought with a price, therefore glo- 1 Cor. vi. rify God with your body, and in your spirit, 20. which are his. Every christian is self-dedicated to him, and you, ministers, doubly so. He is daily beneficent to you, and still attendeth your great interest. Can you think any labour too great for him, who once died, and now ever liveth to make intercession for you?

(3.) FORGET not the short time you have to labour in this kind. Our Lord was moved by this confideration, I must John ix. work the work of him that fent me, while 4. it is day; for the night cometh, wherein no man can work. Death (at farthest) will put at end to your opportunities of service in this world, (who will not then wish he had laboured more?) and death will release you from all that's toilsome; the nearness of

which

SERM. which rest should restore your spirits when

X. flagging.

(4.) MEDITATE on the great rewards which will be given when your work is finished, Dan. xii. 3. Keep your eye on the prize, that you may be encouraged to labour with greater diligence, and to answer whatever is fuggested to narrow or abate your service. Scruple not this argument which the Holy Ghoft fo often urgeth, nor think you are mercenary in having (with Moses) a respect to the recompence of reward. Heb. xi. fo that you own all is purchased by Christ, 26. and bestowed as a reward of grace, and not of debt to any merits of yours: Then you may apply to yourselves, I Cor. xv. 58. Therefore be you stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

(5.) In all labours you undertake for Christ, act faith on him and his promises for affistance: In him have we righteousness and strength. It's his interest is concerned, you are no more than instruments he employeth, and therefore wait on him for renewed strength, as calls to service return.

Mat xxviii He promised to be with his ministers to the end of the world. Yea, every believer, in the hardest labour he is called to, may expect proportionable strength. When your spirits seem to fail, yet if you retain a hearty willingness, plead that word, and expect

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the performance: They that wait on the Lord SERM. Shall renew their strength, they shall mount X. up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. In hope of this, still renew your attempts when you appear to be most dispirited.

IV. Observ. THE weary faints when dead shall be at rest. The future happiness is called a rest; the rest which God provides, and one in part refembling his own, therefore called his rest. It compre-Heb. iv. hends all the glory and perfection of the 1,5. heavenly state, but that's express'd by this word rest, with respect to the pains and labours of this present life. To sense this is a lively expression of happiness, as it is ease after torment, a quiet harbour after storms, fresh spirits after toil, a relaxation after intense endeavours, peace after war, and refreshing sleep after weary labour. Such an account of the righteous after death you find, I/a. lvii. 2. He shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds. And faints are faid to fall afleep. The prospect is comfortable: Let all who are weary, apply it for confolation; your rest is near; you who are in pain, will shortly be at eafe. For,

1. All pain will be superseded by the truest pleasures: God shall wipe away all Rev. xxi. tears from their eyes, and there shall be no 4 more death, sorrow, nor crying; neither

O 3 Shall

X. things are passed away. This is most fully accomplished in heaven, where the body will be too spiritual and incorruptible to admit diseases; there will be the persect eucrasy, which prevents all sickness and bodily pain, that are now so grievous. You'll groan no more, but a placid hail

constitution shall always remain.

Sin can no longer afflict your mind; it will be thoroughly purged away, the plague of the heart fully healed; no spawn of evil thoughts, or irregular motion, in body or mind; for nothing which defiles shall enter there. This is true of persons and things too. Persect knowledge and holiness shall so form our whole temper, that had satan room to assault, we shall be so refined by the Spirit, that he should find nothing in us. Happy case! when there shall not be in any saint, either spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. What pleasure will this create!

27.

Eph. v. 27.

THERE will be no pain occasioned by the weakness of other faints. That fulness of light and love which they obtain, will cause them to contribute to our greatest solace and delight. No more shame or grief can have place on their account; all union and harmony rules among them who were here divided; each will be loved as ourselves, and we beloved by all as members of the same body, wherein nothing acteth but as acted by the Holy Ghost.

No

No fights are beheld, or news heard in SERM. those regions, which cause any tormenting passions; as anger, envy, fear, or forrow; for every thing will minister to our chearfulness and entire satisfaction. Our interest in Christ will be no longer doubted, the face of God no more bid, no bitter method neceffary, or used, for our improvement: the cares, the watchings, repentings, hope, ftrivings, jealoufy of our own hearts, felf-examination, and exercises of faith, which are fo necessary in our present condition, as probationers, will be too low and irksome for those heavenly mansions. The vision of God, with the full emanations of his love, will yield nothing below what fuits rewarded conquerors; and in the presence of Christ not one thing necessary to yield fullest satisfaction can be wanting.

At God's right-hand shall flow those rivers of pleasure that make up that ocean of the joy of our Lord, into which we enter, and wherein we shall always swim, Psal. xvi. 11. Matt. xxv. 21. For pinching wants, there will be given bottomless treasure; for heart-breaking reproaches, a name of glory and renown; for an abject condition, we are made kings and priests unto Rev. i. 7. God for ever and ever. Readiness of enjoyment, will hinder all painful pressure in our

defires of further good.

SERM. 2. THE highest employs will be per-X. feetly discharged without any weariness.

This point I shall divide.

(1.) THE heavenly state is not a state of idleness, nor of mean employments. Divine wisdom, that now allots work proportioned to all our lesser abilities, will not leave our higher abilities unemployed; we know that angels have their business. The extent of the work of gloristed saints is a secret, but be sure it is great and noble. As they are not idle spectators, so their employment will be suitable to their persected powers and active natures. Innocent Adam had work to do in his paradise below, and it was correspondent to that region wherein he was placed. Departed saints, in the

Isa, lvii. 2. paradise above, are said to walk in their uprightness, or before God; which notes a stated course of active performances; and all this as becomes men translated into the immediate presence of God (for before bim are the words best render'd in agreeableness to the subject spoken of.) They shall be always doing; but nothing to be done is below the purity and dignity of the prefence and station they are advanced to. By a believing view of him, they uprightly discharged the more servile work on earth, (which is his footstool) but now standing before him among his noblest servants, and blest with the vision of his glory, their employment is advanced to what belongs this almighty king. By what is spoken of X. gloristed saints, it would seem, the exercise of superintendency, with dominion over inferiors, is committed to them; for they are not only crowned as conquerors, but called kings. They have authority over ci-Rev. v. 10. ties, some of more, others of sewer. They Luke xix. sit on thrones, &c. But be that as it will, 17, 19. work they have; they are praising and admiring God and his Christ; they pay him constant homage, and whatever service he allots them.

2. WHATEVER is the work of faints, it will not be laborious, or any way tirefome: Bleffed are the dead who die in the Rev. xiv. Lord, that they may rest from their labours, 13. and their works shall follow them. Only they who die in the Lord shall rest; it's by death these may so rest; and all these who die united to Christ (tho' no martyrs) shall rest from their labours; not only from sufferings, but from all that's laborious or toilsome; which may include, that all that they shall perform, shall be easy to them: but it may be, this is defigned more expresly by the next words, their works shall follow them. I know it's a truth, that the reward of the works of faints shall follow them, or their works in order to that reward. But the word anoned is often used to express also the promptness and easiness in doing a thing. In this sense there's this close

X. all that's laborious or toilfome, especially bearing the cross, they shall not rest from all works; and tho' they shall still work, yet that shall in no wise abate their rest: for their works shall follow them as freely and easily, as what's most natural and agreeable, without any force, difficulty, or tediousness.

INDEED how can the faints be weary in any performance, when the whole man will be mighty and ever vigorous? fo fpiritualized and heavenly, that his spirits will never be exhausted, for his work is never intermitted: They shall serve him day and night; they shall not hunger nor thirst any more; for by their unabated vigour, they need no refreshments or intermission by food or sleep; neither shall the sun light on them, or any beat, i. e. there will be nothing to incommode, or make them faint or liftless in their service; no opposition, disturbance, or difficulty from without, not the least indisposition or reluctancy from within. The highest accomplishments of fuch texts on earth, referve a higher for the heavens; and therefore ought to be used to express the felicity of this state, which far transcends what the church is ever capable of on earth.

As the faints will be like angels, in a freedom from defire and affection to any, as related in the flesh, so they shall be like them

Rev. vii.

in abiding strength, vigour, chearfulness, SERM. and unweariedness in the greatest undertakings; as fresh and fit for the next work, as if we had done nothing before; and finish every thing with the same fervour and intenfeness, as if just beginning it. vital breath we always draw, the indwelling spirit, by which our very bodies are incorruptible and immortal, prevent decays by the greatest exercises, and all weariness Souls perfected by grace, spiriin them. tualized bodies, and heavenly work in fight of the glory of Christ, will account for the greatest exercise not being labour, and the exceeding weight of glory being no burden. So far are the employments of heaven from being a toil, that they'll be a great share of the faints reward, and are for the most part represented as if singing praises, and Rev. v. 9. admiring God, and the Lord our Redeemer, were the whole of their fervice; and drinking the water of life, and walking in the Rev. xxi. light of beaven, the sum of their business.

O BLESSED condition! wherein we shall be still knowing more, yet without any irksome study; perform the noblest acts, yet never be strained or tired; and with pleasure always behold that glory without dazzling, which now would overwhelm us! Happy change, that will render our faculties suited to things so amazing!

SERM. X.

13.

## APPLICATION.

MATTERS of this kind do so plainly and warmly suggest proper uses, that I hope all of you are applying them to your selves by such inferences and resolves as these.

Ist, It's my highest concern to be sure I am a godly man. For it's such only who can hope to share in this rest: it's such as Daniel to whom God saith, Thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of

the days. This rest after death is of that Heb. iv. 1. great consequence, that a mere seeming to come short of it, is ground of affecting fear; especially if you consider that failing of this, you shall endure such torments as the greatest in this world are but slea-bites, compared therewith: body and soul must fear the wrath of God to

that degree, as shall glorify the power of 2Thess. i. it: No rest night nor day in those slames.

8. Also how base and tiresome will your employment be in the unseen state; no way virtuous, pleasant, honourable, useful, religious, or diverting. By the account God gives, thy eternity will be chiefly spent in expressing thy enraged resentments of

EXAMINE therefore your state by the gospel, for that's the lowest rule of judgment. If that condemns you as ungodly, the Lord your judge will by sentence de-

clare

clare you to be such for whom he never pur- SERM. chased this rest; but if the gospel pronounce X. you godly, this rest will be adjudged to you. Try then, are you regenerate, penitent, sound believers? Do the true frame of your hearts, and the course of a godly conversation, witness hereto? O rest not till this be beyond danger or doubt! If that be cleared, then it follows,

2dly, How indebted am I to Jesus Christ and free grace! How much indebted for what I have received, and for what greater things which I may affuredly expect? O from what mifery shall I be delivered! to what happiness and honour am I to be admitted! I deserved the forest pains which I ever felt; the curse I was once under did bind upon me not only these, but the torments of hell too. My release from endless destruction I no ways merited; but this cost my Redeemer a bitter life, and a painful death after the greatest labours. He gave me fome rest already, when I was wearied, Matt. xi. under guilt. How often hath he fup-28. ported me under pains, fweetned them to me by his love, as well as fanctified them by his power. These are effects of his abounding grace, but they yield greatest delight, as they are an earnest of that 2 Theff. i.] universal, perfect rest in glory. This he 7. is fecuring for me, and ripening me for. O that I could esteem, love, serve, and honour

SERM. honour my Lord, as becomes a poor fin-

ner fo vaftly indebted to him.

adly, WHAT a witness am I to the supplies of the Spirit of Christ? By these my decayed strength hath been renewed for fervice, and I continued labouring, tho' often weary. I have done but too little, yet this had been undone, if he had not quickned my foul, and restored my vigour. By these have I been kept refisting the tempter, who had almost foil'd me: I continued praying, though ready to cast it off as useless: I persevere in his ways fo long beyond what I feared, and return to fill up my place far above my expectation. All may fee in my affistances, that the influences of the Spirit are neither fancies, ineffectual, nor needless. How else could I stand who have been falling fo often, and continue to this day faithful in his work, when some years fince I was fo faint, as almost to give it over? Happy, you faints above, all whose work is easy; yet glory to my Lord, that my more difficult work is fo far perform-2 Cor. xii. ed. Sure his strength is manifest in my weakness, as well as in their perfection. O let me still be strong in the power of thy might; or I shall soon be overwhelmed: yet, affure me of repeated supplies, and I will, when most conscious of my own weakness, attempt the hardest service to which I am called; yea, what help I have

9.

have found (often to my furprize) shall SERM. make me attempt every plain present duty, X. when I am jealous that further supplies fhould be with-held.

4thly, I would not live always; I am Jobvii. not fo fond of pain or weariness, as to 16. be defirous of a longer life than God allots me; nor fo unnaturally averse to rest, as to be unwilling to die, fince that's a necessary means to obtain it. An aversion to death is implanted in human nature, as what's conducive to the continuance and government of mankind; for what man fearless of death would preserve himfelf when in trouble, or be restrained by laws from destroying others on the least provocation? Therefore a natural fear of death, as death, is allowable: Paul himfelf defired not to be uncloathed. He had 2 Cor. v. been glad of heaven in some other way than 2. dying.

But yet an inordinate fear of death, and love of life, must be suppressed, as ill becoming the faith of saints; for to love life for the sake of worldly enjoyments, or from an indifferency to heavenly privileges, is carnal. To love life merely from fear of death (as is our common case, tho' unperceived) is great weakness in any who have a good hope through grace, especially since Christ hath overcome it in his own person, and destroyed by death the Heb. ii. devil who had the power of death; and un-14.

Aung

SERM. flung it by forgiveness of sin through his blood now actually shed, and its acceptance manifested by his resurrection and 1 Cor. xv. glory; yea, and brought life and immortality to light: fo that our refurrection in glory is affured, and the vail much removed from the heavenly state, whereby 2 Tim. i.

death is said to be abolished.

life.

liver you from the fear of death, is it not unreasonable that you should be still Heb.ii.15. Subject to bondage through the fear of it. These things must be either faintly believed, or loofely confidered, if the fear of death can longer chain you to a present

CHRIST having done so much to de-

To a foul rightly affected, there is little to commend this life, except eminent fervice, and hope of greater affurance and meetness for heaven; therefore, as far as these do not influence the godly man, his longings for heaven reconcile him to death; and this present life, as it keeps him from that better life of glory, becomes daily less defirable. Here, tho' I like my Lord's work, yet I am weary of my own imperfections and liftleffness, which nothing short of death will remove. shall have higher work, and at no time burdensome or tedious: There what is now valuable will be completed; all I now principally defire shall be enjoyed. Ah! childish heart, what dost thou see, taste, or enjoy,

enjoy, which should keep thee from cry-Serm. ing, Come, Lord, come quickly; nevertheless X. I'll wait till my change come! He who is Lord of my life shall fix my time, nor shall discontent at any troubles press me to hasten it. It's fit that he honour himself, and serve his own purpose on me by delaying that salvation, which I'll earnestly prepare and look for, whilst life

must be prolonged.

5thly, I WILL be comforted in the death of my godly friends, tho' very dear to me. Shall I be fo felfish as to grudge their release from the evils they felt, or wish them out of those delights and honours they now enjoy? Would I again hear their groans, and fee their wearisom burdens return upon them? Should it not allay my grief to know that if they were to describe their present condition, they would tell me; Now I ferve and enjoy my Lord as I defired, but could not whiles with you. I feel none of those pains I endured when with you. Death hath wholly cleans'd and freed me from whatever you heard me complain of. I now fee plainly the great things which with you I did but guess at: I'm filled with all I hoped for, and find this state infinitely more glorious than the largest mind among you can comprehend. Your world hath no words to express it, all the images by which it is represented in holy writ are ex-VOL. II. ceeding SERM. ceeding faint. You could not bear the fight X. of our glory, nor be content to live if you knew how we live here; we are with our beloved Jesus, who will bring us with him at the great day, when we shall meet with you, and all his other saints, and you become as happy as ourselves by being ever 1 Thess. with the Lord; therefore sorrow not as do 13,14,18. others. Grieve not for us, but see you be not slothful, but followers of us, who now inherit the promises. And let all your trouble on our account be only as our

death is a judgment procured by your fins, or a public calamity, by the removal of instruments fitted for usefulness; or as our pain was beightned to make you willing

to refign us.

THIS leads me to observe some things concerning our deceased brother, the reverend and aged Mr. John Quick. In him the whole of the text is exemplified: how fweet is the heavenly reft! what a friendly messenger was death to him! and how happy a change hath this made in his condition? He in former years was forely persecuted: Among many other faithful ministers he was ejected for nonconformity in the year 62, when he had no more than five pound to subsist on. He justly apprehending that by his office he remained oblig'd to preach as opportunity did prefent, improved fuch occasions under severe trials. He was often indicted for preaching, preaching, excommunicated, many months SERM. in the year 1663 imprisoned, and many X. more in the year 1665. He was driven out of Plymouth, and harraffed for a long time, having no abiding-place, until God provided him one in London: Nor was he unacquainted with the scorns, reproaches; and flanders of the wicked, which pierced

his foul beyond his other hardships.

His bodily pains by the stone were frequent for fix years, and scarce tolerable for the last three. O the piercing groans he continually utter'd under his torments. which almost daily returned! Nights spent without fleep, and in the day-time feldom any ease. His labours were abundant, fufficient to wear out the strongest: In the west, for many years, riding from place to place, often preaching ten times in a fortnight. Of later years, when he scarce got a wink of sleep in the night, through extremity of pain, yet preach'd the next day, fometimes in great agony; or fure to feel the fudden return of his torture. When he was in a state of health, he usually got into his well-furnished study at two a clock in the morning; and when diftempers seized him, he spent the greatest part of the night in reading, meditation, and prayer.

By this short abstract you'll be convinc'd he was of the number of the troubled and the weary: A change by death

must

X. he is entred into his rest in the 70th year of his age, near fifty whereof were spent in the work of the gospel, and that in many

afflictions and great difficulties.

THAT he is among those for whom this rest was prepared, he gave good evidence to others, had an assured hope in his own mind, which he strictly examined under the near views of eternity, and retained to the end unshaken, though sometimes assaulted.

God wrought a faving change on his heart in his youth; upon which he devoted himself to Christ, and to his work in the ministry. By great temptations he was confirmed, the length of one of his exercises was tedious and sad; of which he writes his fense at that time; "O this " inundation of blasphemous thoughts " came in the midst of prayer, one seem-" ing roaring in his ears, there's no God " nor devil, no heaven nor hell, no life " after death. These legions followed " me from one ordinance to another, fo " that I was almost distracted, and they " grew worse and worse under all my " struggles. O, cried he to the eminent " Mr. Hughs, I shall be undone ever-" lastingly. Wherever I am, I am haunted, " I am plagued with these atheistical " thoughts. These hellish feinds do hurry " me; I pray, I fast, and go mourning

" all the day, yet they are my insepara- SERM.

ble companions: Ah I shall perish for-

ever by the hands of these Sauls. But

at the end of feveral weeks he found " Mr. Hughs's words true: As these trou-

" blefome and vexatious thoughts intruded

without your invitation, so will they be

gone without your observance; and

" you'll as much wonder how you come

" to be freed, as you are now aftonished

and terrified by them. But he followed

" his counsel too, viz. acting faith on

" Christ, and persisting in every duty, " notwithstanding these disturbances."

HE was faithful to his light; and tender and studious to know his duty. Upon deliberate examination he was convinced that conformity wou'd be a fin in him, therefore he chose contempt, poverty, and bonds, rather than comply: He refused preferments often offered to him fince; once 300 l. per annum.

HE was zealously resolved in his work: When a whole bench of justices offered to release him from prison, if he'd promise to forbear preaching, he told them, No, for I far more fear that woe from God if I preach not the Gospel. The suddenness and warmth of his temper made him generally the more active, though fometimes it eclips'd his worth, and was his

bewailed burden.

X.

SERM. THE bleffing of God made his labours fuccessful to the conversion of many in feveral places; his supports and consolations from heaven were very fignal under his exercises; once to a justice, telling him to what remote prison he would fend him, he replied, I know not where you are fending me; but this I'm sure of, my heart is as full of comfort as it can hold. His deliverances were often fignally providential, and fometimes by warnings in his dreams, of which he recorded feveral instances.

THOUGH his temper was fudden, he was a very tender relation, exceeding compaffionate to the diffressed, and laid out his pains and estate too very largely, especially to the banish'd French; for which nation he had a peculiar respect, on the account of their found doctrine, gospel-discipline, fixt adherance to Christ, and the kindness he had found among them in former times.

UNDER all his pains he justified God, often accusing himself as deserving more; crying out, O my fins, my unfaithfulness, deserve hell it self! Lord, give me patience: And confidering his conftitution, it's a strange instance of grace, that in fuch agonies he utter'd no words that shew'd the least repinings against God.

As himself was a learned minister, and well qualified, fo he was earnestly con-

cerned

cerned for a learned faithful ministry; and SERM. forward in encouraging hopeful young men to engage in the work, and to fulfil it. Indeed he had a special concern for all youth, as the hopes of the rifing generation, tho' concerned for a due regard to aged ministers, as the pillars and witnesses of the present. But to conclude, He sent for me a short time before his death, opening to me the state of his foul, and defiring my impartial thoughts of the grounds of his hope. May I never forget the meltings of his heart for past imperfections, and his high admirings of Christ, on whose righteousness, as the only merit of life, he rested; and yet a fincere compliance with the gospel-way, of its application, he with folemnity declared, and made evident. Thus passed he to rest.

Were he to speak to us ministers, he wou'd now say, Fear not your troubles, abate not your labours: O this rest abundantly answers for all. You that are pained, wait as I have done, I am eased of all, and seel heaven the sweeter by what I endured. Let me speak for him to you his people: See that his labours rise not against you; be watchful, that when you meet him at the last day, he may rejoice in you, as well as be approved for his own sidelity. In the mean time, let a remembrance of him help to keep you united, and dispose you to great benefit by the labours of that

P 4 worthy

SERM. worthy brother who fucceeds him; and

will not forget his dying charge.

As to his exemplary widow and child, do you excel in proportion to the helps you enjoy'd by his life, expect a return of his many prayers for you, walk worthy of his name, and let his release from the heavy groans you heard fo often, and the bleffed reft he now partakes of, prevent all immoderate forrow for his death.



## A Thanksgiving-SERMON.

Preached December 31. 1706.

## ISAIAH XII. 7.

Sing unto the Lord, for he hath done excellent things, this is known in all the earth.

the joyful praises of God, XI. and thanksgivings to him.

In my text, 1. All are called to join in this work, they mutually excite each

other; Sing to the Lord, q. d. let none neglect their part, let's help one another to do it more suitably to that sacred name, and to this great occasion.

2. The reason of this charge; He hath done excellent things. The things wrought are excellent; it's this Lord who performed these things, and whoever are the instruments employ'd in all, or any of them,

SERM. them, they are his doings who gave abili-

XI. ties, and render'd them effectual.

3. This is further strengthned by the notoriety of these doings, This is known in all the earth; the advantage extends to many countries, the fame refounds to all. The things are fo illustrious, that they command an amazing regard; yea, the hand of God is fo figually manifest therein, that none can disown him to be the author. Those who scarce confessed his being, they who denied his providential government, are forced to acknowledge that he produced these wonders, and none below him were capable of fuch glorious performances. Yea, the enemies who fuffer by his wondrous appearances for his people, dare not refuse a confession. that these are the Lord's doings. All which greatly inforce the duty mentioned, q. d. Hath God done fuch excellent things, as bring the most stupid to reverence his name, and his enemies to confess his power; and shall not we, his church, who are more enlightned to discern, and more profited by what he hath wrought, as well as better affected to his glory, fing unto the Lord? The earth would testify against us as stupid and ungrateful, should we neglect or be heartless in this work of praise.

Doct. When God hath done excellent things for his people, they ought to fing

unto him.

Ishall, I. GIVE a general explication of this doctrine, and briefly prove it.

II. Bring our case to this truth, by a particular application.

THE first will require an answer to these two questions.

of God for his people call'd excellent?

I. Answ. As they out-do all human works. In this fense all the works of God are excellent; for, compared with the performances of men, yea, or of the highest angels, they are to be celebrated: as, Among the gods there is none like unto thee, Pf. lxxxvi. O Lord, neither are there any works like 8. unto thy works. Who can equal the very least of his creatures? The work of redemption, and the application thereof by his Spirit, is incomprehensible by angels, They defire to look into these things; and will IPet. i.12. join with us in eternally admiring the grace and wisdom of God therein. The common acts of providence also do far surpass the best-laid defigns of creatures. Such are their connection, vast reaches, and depths, that when God chargeth his angels Job. iv. 18. with folly, he chargeth them not with a fault; yet he declares how incompetent they are for the management of his providential kingdom; or to be trufted otherwife therein, than as ministers under his own direction.

2. Answ.

2d Answ. As they exceed the common ope-SERM. XI. rations of God's providence. For though all his works are perfect in their kind, yet

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6, 7.

fome are faid to excel, and that on fundry accounts; but principally, when God's perfections shine by them with extraor-

Exod. xv. dinary lustre; Thy right hand is become glorious in power, and in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee; thou sentest forth thy wrath, which confumed them as stubble. It's thus, when the obstacles are unusually great, the dangers imminent, the inftruments unlikely, the feafon critical, the benefits great and extensive, and a co-incidence of many defigns unexpectedly brought about. Deliverances, or other mercies, attended with fuch circumstances, are justly called excellent. And this is the usual method God takes in the accomplishment of eminent promises, and prophefies, concerning his church, as might be largely instanced; nor need we other than my text, if it point at the restoration of the Jews, the conversion of the Gentiles, and the eminent holiness and happiness of both in the Messiah's kingdom; which are prophesied of in the two foregoing chapters.

> 2 2. WHAT is it to fing unto the Lord? 1 A. To record and publish the praises of God from a fense of his hand, and a conviction of his existence, and transcen-

dant

dant perfection demonstrated in his works; SERM. Sing ye unto the Lord, be hath triumphed XI. The extraordinariness of the glorioully. work leads the foul to acknowledge a fu-Exod. xv. preme being as the author; for none lower could effect it. His perfections thus manifested, impress the mind, and excite our powers to exalt his name, and make Pf. lxvi.2. his praise glorious. A song of praise is defigned to commend God, and his works (or rather God for his works) to the efteem and admiration of others; and to perpetuate the memory thereof among others, as well as our felves. When God is faid to bless men, he confers some great benefit; but when men bless God for his greatest favours or appearances, it's no more than affectionately owning, and proclaiming his happiness, who possesseth those perfections which his works declare; and is the communicative fountain of all the benefits dispenced by those wonders.

2d A. Thankfully to acknowledge our concern in, advantage and obligations by those excellent works of his in our behalf. It must be a song of thanksgiving to our Neh. xii, God, as well as praise; the benefits de-46-sign'd and bestow'd on us by his wonderful operations, must so affect our hearts, that a thankful mind becomes the spring of our songs of praise; and this, as we perceive it was on our behalf, and for our own benefit, that he appear'd thus glo-

rioufly.

SERM. riously. The praises of one who hath XI. done excellent things may be mentioned, but if those great things do not concern us, we are more cool; and account our selves little obliged to any great returns to that person. But when we are deeply sensible that all was perform'd for our advantage, this endears him to us, and enclines us to study suitable returns of thanks; yea, we account our selves obliged to pay him all the just service of which we are capable.

3d A. GREATLY to rejoice in these

3d A. GREATLY to rejoice in these praises and thanksgivings to God. We must not only rejoice in the benefit we receive by his works, but also in our praises

Pfa.xcviii. and thanksgivings to God for them; Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth; make a loud noise, and rejoice and sing praise.

Joy confined to our own benefit is too selfish; our delight and satisfaction should

i Chron. have higher regards. We ought to glory in his praise, that he is so perfect and excellent a being, that his perfections are thus manifested, and that his wonderful works do eminently subserve his own glory at present, and for suture ages too. We must be glad that this God is thus concerned for us, and especially that he who is thus

God in covenant. This makes his works

Neh. vi. most terrible to our enemies, Our enemies

were much cast down, for they perceived
that this work was wrought of our God.

perfect and excellent in working, is our

This

This gives the most affecting weight in SERM. godly mens esteem: This God is our God XI. for ever and ever. Without an interest in him, the greatest benefits are empty, and Ps. xlviii. will be fnares. His perfections carry terror in them as to our eternal concerns, wherein lies our chief interest. Nor can we be affured of any future appearances for our present weal; therefore as songs express joy, happy they who are come unto God by Christ into a league of amity, and can gladly triumph thus; God, even our own P. lxxvi. God, shall bless us. Let's watch against a 6. mere carnal joy, and also against fullenness, and any frame wherein a chearful fatisfaction is not expressed; My lips shall Ps. lxxi. greatly rejoice, when I fing unto thee.

I SHALL briefly prove, that when God doth excellent things for his people, they

ought to fing unto him.

rst R. This is what God requires and expecteth; Sing unto the Lord, for he hath Jer. xxviii deliver'd the soul of the poor from the hand of 13-evil doers. As prayer is a homage paid to him as the only one who is able to supply our wants; so praises and thanks are a return by which his goodness and greatness are recogniz'd, and our dependance on him is devoutly confessed; therefore God often reproves those as prosane, who neglect his praises after benefits received.

2d R. THE excellent works of God must excite all well-disposed minds to sing unto him.

SERM. him. Such is the nature of them, that XI. unless the heart be prejudiced by malignity, unbelief, pride, or levity, it cannot fail to acknowledge God's praises for them; for they strike the mind with wonder, as they are great; they melt into kind affections, as instances of divine love; and excite gratitude in a heart sensible of its own unworthiness, as they are highly beneficial. We find God's people praying for such mercies, that they might be excited hereby to Psal. cvi. their songs of thanksgivings; Save us, O Lord, our God, and gather us from among

Lord, our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy name, and to triumph in thy praise. Those brighter views which saints have of God in his wondrous works, greatly strengthen their saith and love to him; which graces will proportionably stir up their joyful praises and thanksgivings, as these in exercise draw out their souls to exalt him to their utmost;

Neh. ix. 5. and then to add, Thou, Lord, art exalted Pial. cvi. above all blessing and praise: Who can shew

forth all thy praise?

3d R. God will accept this when finPfal cxvi cerely managed. He accounts it a facri17.
Pfal. 1. 23. fice; he records himself glorified thereby.
This is a pledge of future mercies; and
God often testifieth his being pleased therewith, by continuing to act for grateful
persons; yea, in augmenting his wonders
in their behalf. This, which will be a
great part of our employ in heaven, is
highly

highly regarded when offered in the name SERM. of Christ on earth. XI.

doing such excellent things. He displays his glory to awaken praise, and makes his goodness known, as a motive to thanksgiving. When God prophesied of the return of Israel by wonders, he issued to their songs of praise, by which his redeemed Jer.xxxiii. Is should exalt his goodness. Nor is this work in of praise among his people, of small use as to others, for it is a fit means to bring them to know and love the blessed God, and excite them to trust and serve him, whose wonders are thus proclaimed by his saints.

II. I SHALL bring our particular case to this doctrine.

England is appointed by our gracious Queen this day to fing unto the Lord, and the ground of it is the same with my text; for the Lord bath done excellent things; and this is known in all the earth. All holy assemblies profess to be thus employ'd, and God observes with a jealous eye whether it be performed in a right manner.

I AM fure, if we acquit ourselves worthy of the occasion, our hearts will be enlarg'd in the bigh praise of our God; for he hath made this year remarkable to all suture ages, by the excellent things which he hath wrought; not a few, but many; not what was in the compass of buman wit and Vol. II,

XI. was able to perform: Nor yet what his providence ordinarily effecteth, but such as are wonderful, and in some respects not to be parallel'd in former ages. If they come short in the immediateness of some of the appearances of God for Israel, they exceed in the extensiveness of the parties and places concerned: And this is known in all the earth.

THAT corner is barbarous which is wholly infenfible; most habitable places will reap the benefit one way or other. The advantages are more visible as to all Europe, for the least concerned parts thereof, had in time felt inconvenience by the uncontrouled power of the French, and our popish allies are deliver'd from his oppressing encroachments; all his own enflaved fubjects have a prospect of the sweets of civil liberties, as well as Protestants, of being faved from the inhuman cruelties fo long inflicted by him, on no pretence, except that of religion. I need not add the benefit accruing to us, and our Protestant allies; unless popery, persecution, slavery, proud infults, poverty, and barbarous devastations, are accounted innocent things.

But what I chiefly regard, is this, the occurrences of this year are wonderful to that degree, that all forts openly confess the hand of the almighty God therein, and ascribe the honour to his name: When the

Pfal. cii,

Lord

Lord buildeth up Sion, he shall appear in SERM. his glory. When God performs wondrous XI. things, he is faid to shine forth. So palpable Pfal. lxxx. are the displays of his perfections, that not .. only our renowned generals, but the pri-Pfal. 1. 2. vate foldiers; not only the ferious, but the profane, agree that these are the Lord's doings: The very atheists own a providence by fensible observation. It's too common for instruments to challenge the glory of great actions to themselves; but, I think, it is feldom known, that officers fo unanimoufly agreed, as ours do, in folemnly declaring that God, and not man, brought us these victories. Nay, our fretting enemies amazedly ascribe our triumphs to the Lord's appearing for us; and because of it, are filled with terror. So that in the whole, by our present occasion, that place is exemplified, And it shall be to me a name of Jer. xxxiii. joy, and an honour before all the nations of 9. the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them; and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness, and for all the prosperity that I procure unto them.

WE are beset with such heaps of wonders, that as we cannot number them, or pretend to know all the circumstances by which they are aggrandized, so its hard to range them into such order, that they should not justle, and several lay claim to the same excellency that appears in any other. Therefore, in compliance with the straitness of

Q 2

time

SERM. time, and the truest design of this solemnity, XI. I shall reduce some of these great things under those divine perfections which therein are most eminently display'd, and also call you to acknowledge these in a right manner.

1. SING to the Lord with joyful praises and thanksgiving, for the excellent displays of his perfections in his works for England this year.

2. BE careful that your fong be fuch as

he requires, and will accept.

1. Ex. Sing to the Lord with joyful praises and thanksgiving, for the excellent displays of his perfections in his works for

England.

As all benefits are excellent to the degree of God's communications of himself therein, so all his works are excellent, as he manifests himself thereby; and the acknowledgment thereof should be the chief subject of right songs unto the Lord. If we perceive not his glory by his works, or record not our observations, and direct them to his glory, they are not songs of praise to him: Therefore attend to God's perfections, and lift up your hearts in extolling them, as they shine forth in the occurrences of this marvellous year.

Pfal. xxi.

(1.) Sing to the almighty power of God. How can we refuse to sing, and praise his power? How irresistible is that arm, which scattered the mighty armies, and subdued a strength

a strength that seemed to themselves in-Serm. vincible. A great power besieged Barce-XI. lona; but tho' so ill fortissed, the wasted enemy shamefully withdrew. It was not a weak force which he subdued at Ramillies, but a numerous army; it was not a small deseat, but a total one, which was given to the choicest troops of France and Bavaria; they see in a confusion equal to that of the most undisciplin'd cowards. At his command many great cities open their gates, and vast provinces are reduced in less time than a small fortress hath surrendered heretofore.

AT Turin the French were in number twelve thousand above the allies, and under great advantages, yet are they affaulted by this leffer force, and that fatigued by tedious marches, and part of it long infulted; however, the multitude are forced to quit their entrenchments, and the befiegers, with the additional strength of the duke of Orleans, are entirely defeated. Upon this victory, whole countries are foon recovered, which, in the ordinary course, must, by parcels, and vast expence of blood and treasure, have been subdued. Ascribe, Psal. lxvii. you, strength to our God, whose influence is 34. also mighty on the spirits of men; for his power exerted itself, in striking a terror into the hearts of our enemies, and making them who were noted for valour, to become as women. This is obvious in most Jer. li. 30.

Q3

of

Deut. xxxii. 4.

85.

SERM. of the engagements; but it was acknowledged, by the Marshal Marsin, as the cause XI. of their overthrow at Turin, when our forces were animated with uncommon vigour. You must be perverse, if you sing

Exod. xv. not, that the Lord hath triumphed glorioufly. Thus hath he done over him, who was well affured to give laws to Europe; who had accepted titles full of blasphemy; and in the beginning of this year infulted in Italy, and on the Rhine, as if all his former wounds were healed. Nor can I omit the impression of God on mens bearts, in preferving an alliance fo long among persons of fuch different tempers and interests, and inclining England and Holland, on foreign fecurity, to that great loan, without which our triumphs in Italy had been impossible.

> 2. Sing of the Lord's righteousness and terrible justice. His doings compel us to fay, He is without iniquity; just and right is he: He hath pleaded our righteous cause against an usurping perfidious king, one who knows no limits by right, and thinks his claim just to whatever he can seize by force or craft; one, no treaty or oath binds longer than he is unable to violate them by strength, or basest methods. He now feels

Pfal.lxviii. that God is terrible out of bis boly places; his perfidiousness is a proclaimed reason against our treating with him, till his weakness incapacitate him to break his engagements: He hath swam in blood to satisfy

his

his cruelty, or ferve his own ambition; SERM. and now God gives his foldiers to the fword, and fwept away many scores of thousands this very year. His treasures are consumed, by which men were bribed to unnatural villanies. What bafte hath God made to reduce him, who used to finish a campaign before his enemies took the field? Horrors and shame have taken hold of him, who was the terror of Europe, and rival'd with God for glory. His spirit (the' seemingly composed for a time) is, by a succession of humbling tidings, made to stoop, and amidst distractions to acknowledge, the Most High ruleth among the children of men. I often ventured to fay, If a perfecutor of his kind went out of the world unmark'd by divine vengeance, providence varied from its usual methods. And it gives me hope that God will finish his work, because his rebukes are begun in a manner fo fudden and fignal, Every thing feems defigned to exasperate his mind; his confident hopes, and former fuccesses, cause the sharper resentments of his defeats by one of the Queen's fex, and the States, whom he despis'd. He seemed lifted up, to shew the vileness of human nature, and the feverity of delay'd vengeance: Thus is the Lord known by the Pf. ix. 16. judgments which he executes. My tongue Pfal. lxxi. shall talk of thy righteousness all the day 24. long, for they are confounded that feek my burt. This year affords so remarkable an instance Q4

SERM. instance of God's displeasure at the apostaly of the king of Poland, that I dare not difregard fo loud a warning. He, for a crown, denied his God, by turning papist; but had scarce enjoyed a quiet hour, till he was dethron'd: nor did he a glorious thing, until he agreed to abdicate, and then obtain'd

a famous victory.

3. Sing of the unsearchable wisdom of He is wife in heart, and mighty in Job ix. 4. God. strength. By secular interests he divided popish princes in this war, and that against the endeavours of their common father: And they whose union had been dangerous to the protestant religion, are brought to weaken him, who, by the Jesuits prediction, was to perfect the extirpation of the northern herefy. To render the protestant name confiderable, the powers fo denominated are the only agents in the glorious conquests in Flanders; yea, in Italy, as well as Spain, the attempts and success are chiefly owing to their influence. Our God defeated the well-adjusted measures of France; for by his storms he delay'd their fleet, that Barcelona should not be reduced before relief was possible; and lock'd up ours folong, that the befiegers strength might be wasted, with safety to that place. But when the moment came that it could no longer hold out, the winds bring our far distant squadrons together, and carry them to that city's most seasonable relief. It's probable

probable that God over-ruled that disafter SERM. of the enemy, as a motive to venture the XI. battle at Ramillies, without which we had spent a whole season as fretting spectators of his fortified lines. And, if reports be true, he undertook and loft that battle by falling into a pit, which he had digg'd, and being deceived by a trick of his own framing. Wisdom pitch'd on the critical feason for Turin's deliverance; for when God had amazingly spirited the besieged (with fuch loss to the French) to hold out, till they had scarce powder left to salute their restored prince: Then, then salvation came, which, if delay'd a day, must have prevented that battle, and the amazing changes which enfued. May not we also behold it as one reach of his wisdom, that the Vaudois had an opportunity, by their service, to convince the duke of Savoy, that they are necessary to him, and fit to be trusted; and that neither that country's interest, nor these mens characters, were justly apprehended in the times of their persecution. Many other ways of this perfection of our Creator, are obvious; but I shall mention no more, except this one in our kingdom: He fuffer'd fome dangerous attempts to proceed fo far, as to awaken a remiss nation to elect a good parliament; which heartily encourag'd this war, both by fufficient grants, and countenancing the employment of persons whose hearts are in

SERM. the cause. To this only wife God be glory. Let us exalt him, who made the counsel of XI. the wife counsellors of Pharoah bruitish (tho' long fam'd for experience, craft, and po-27. Ifa. xix. licy.)

4. Sing to the Lord for his infinite goodness. By this his other perfections were set on work for our benefit. All the defeats of France are propitious to us, as that oppresfor is disabled to pursue his usurpations, and take revenge. I might enlarge on the many reasons we have for that acclamation, How

great is thy goodness!

OUR misery had been unutterable, if he had not wonderfully appeared for us. His ordinary methods had not prevented flavery and popery, with the long train of mifchiefs inseparable therefrom. The very calamities of the French Protestants are but a small part of what we might expect from a king so cruel to his own dispirited innocent subjects. These miseries were unavoidable to human view; great efforts had not succeeded to abate his prospect; nor need we a greater evidence of our danger, than his remaining strength, after such expence of blood and treasure. Review his loss of men but since the beginning of this war in feveral places, as Blenheim, Veru, Barcelona, Ramilles, Turin, (not to mention others, or any thing at fea, or in the many garrifons we have taken.)

COMPUTE also the money expended SERM. in bribes, magazines, pay, and other sup- XI. ports of his armies, of his lufts, and government, &c. and confider after all this, how his present influence on Spain, Poland, Ottoman Court, Hungary, the Empire, Rome, and other parts, continues, with his preparations for another campaign; and must we not, with trembling, adore the goodness of our God, that we are not confumed. To what a miracle of mercy to us, to all the protestant churches, and the other nations. must it be ascribed! that God fixed his book in his nostrils, when he was just feizing on the prey, and after the first surprizing shock to his hopes at Blenheim, purfued the blow, by defeating his ftrong attempts to retrieve his point. Every victory (tho' fo multiplied and great) is a high instance of divine favour, because our danger was great, had we failed of any, even the last: O praise the Lord for his goodness. Pfal. evil. This hath exerted itself not only in fuc-8. ceffes abroad, but by those has diminished and muzzled our unnatural enemies at home. Gospel-privileges, tho' repined at by some, are still enjoyed; our Queen's health continued, with a mind steady to the publick welfare; capable to bear, and well use the glory heaped on her royal name; and so moderate, as to engage all hearts averse to popery and slavery. Among our benefits, we may well recount the

SERM. the prolong'd life of her royal confort, the XI. mutual confidence between her Majesty and parliament, with the harmony among themselves, in pursuit of the common good. How gracious is our God, that under great losses, the nation is able, and the body of it so prudent, as to desire the continuance of the war, notwithstanding its expensiveness; and the secret endeavours (by misrepresenting our counsellors, and presaging improbable dangers) to exaspe-

rate the unthinking.

RENDER thanksgiving for the safety of our glorious general, tho' very often in danger; also that England is easy, when other nations feel the distresses and terrors of war. We possess as great a share of civil liberty, as a wife man can defire; whereas most kingdoms dare scarce resent their slavery, and others boaft of the mere appearance of freedom. Justice runs down like a stream, health sweetens our other comforts, and plenty subsisteth us in waiting till God fecure and enlarge our trade, by a defirable peace; a peace so firm, as shall not expose us to the same dangers, and thereby the loss of all the blood and treafure expended for our fafety. Nor ought our hopes of an union with Scotland, for the common benefit, take the lowest place in our acknowledgments.

AND yet the goodness of God is most manifested in his conferring blessings, thus great and numerous, on a people unworthy

ficent to men, whose returns are unsuitable XI. to former benefits; and unwilling to reform, tho' our happiness is prolonged from age to age, by a series of astonishing deliverances, and especially from the attempts for restoring popery: But of this I lately discoursed at large. Let us all say, from our hearts, We will mention the loving-kindness of the Isa. kiii. Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that he hath bestowed on us, &c. The great advantages rationally hoped from our success, might also be taken in; but I am forced to omit many which we actually enjoy.

5. Sing to the Lord for his infallible truth. He condescends, in making promises, to relieve and comfort us by the prospect of future good; and by sure performance of these, he magnifies his word Psal. xxx. above all his name. God is most jealous of cour distrusting his word, therefore we may be sure he expects his faithfulness should be proclaimed when he accomplished his word. In respect of this perfection also, we have cause to sing of the mercies of the Psal. xcix. Lord, and with our mouth to make known this faithfulness. I shall mention three scriptures fulfilled before our eyes, in the stu-

(1.) Them that honour me, I will honour; 1 Sam. ii. and they that despise me, Shall be lightly 30. esteemed. This is made good; and the lat-

pendous works we are commemorating.

SERM. ter part, tho' a threatning, is in our case the performance of the former, to the glory of the instruments by whom the threat is executed. Our excellent Queen is concerned to honour God, by defending the Protestant religion, rescuing the liberties and rights of neighbours from his claws, who made a prey of both, and was just devouring what remained. And fuch at home as defire to live peaceable lives in all godliness and bonesty, the defends in so doing. Whilst her Majesty is thus employed, God hath clothed her with honour beyond any prince alive: yea, who among the dead can equal her in glorious fuccesses, with so few disappointments; honourable designs without felf-interest; extensive influence without suspicion; and the affection and confidence of her people, without the murmurs or envy of any, except fools or enemies of their country? He hath also put honour on fuch as exposed themselves in the same cause: What subject was ever honoured abroad and at home as the duke of Marlborough, that great instrument of most of our glorious victories? Our armies and navies are renowned among the most famous, and reflect a glory upon Great-Britain and Ireland. I dare not omit, that God feems tender of the honour of king WILLIAM's name, in carrying on what he so happily begun, and commending his measures by our happy fuccess in adhering to them. BEHOLD

BEHOLD the reverse, in the contempt SERM. God pours out on the French king, who usurp'd divine titles, and abused his power, in opposing the interest of our Lord Jesus. How great was he for might, fuccess, and counsel? He feem'd ambitious to transmit a character by which all his ancestors should be wholly eclips'd. But God hath prolonged his days, as if on purpose to stain his glory, and raze out the illustrious monument of his former acquisitions; his wife counsels are become unsettled and weak; his conquests in a great part loft, and more a rescuing. He who boasted insolently of giving peace to Europe, is forced to ask it. and is denied. This patron of princes, and arbiter of kingdoms, fuffers his allies to be deprived, and intreats the poor Cantons to mediate for a peace: His great marshals are discomfited, and flee: His veteran troops (the tools of his oppression and cruelty) are dispirited and slaughter'd: His vast preparations become the spoil of his enemies. God hath effectually spoken to him; as in the prophet, Come down from thy glory: Jer. xlviix his arm is broken, he bath magnified him- 18,25,26. felf against the Lord; he shall wallow in his vomit, and he shall be in derision.

(2.) The Lord thy God will put these curses Deut. on them that hate thee, and which persecuxxx. 7ted thee. Many persecutors have groaned out warnings to others by their miserable end: This man hath outdone all, if we consider

SERM. confider the long continuance, feveral kinds of barbarities, number of fufferers, perfidiousness, and inexcusableness of his per-

fecution. Had he any cause to fear a people, as reconciled to flavery, and as near adoring him as any papists? Mere hatred to religion, with the perjured rape of Spain, is all that could excite him to deprive himfelf of fo great a part of his strength, of which he may be sensible. Now God hath heard the cry of martyrs blood, the groans of tortur'd prisoners and impoverished exiles: He is making inquisition for blood, and remembreth them: He gives him blood to drink, blasteth his excellency, diminisheth his treasures, and breaks his power. I am convinced, the chief of God's controversy with him, is the violence used to his fervants, and glorying over Protestantism as extinct. This gave us the great advantage

for fuch furprizing bafty conquests: for their persecutors thou threwest into the deep, as a stone into the mighty waters. And this 11. affords the furest hope we have, that his

attempts to retrieve his affairs, shall still be frustrated; for, according to an old maxim,

Est. vi. 13. if persecuting Haman begin to fall before the seed of the Jews, he shall not prevail, but fall before him; at least, that God will purfue him till the protestant religion is re-established by some means or other. But why should I suspect the means, when such guilt, dishonour, and ingratitude to God,

Pfal. ix. 12.

Neh, ix.

must lie on those who are fignally employ- SERM. ed to avenge his quarrel, if they neglect to XI. fettle the reformed religion in France. Sure they should never expect the appearances of God on their fide, after fuch a forfeiture. As the jealous God animadverts the French persecutor, he forgets not the blood of the Protestants in Bohemia, which was shed by the duke of Bavaria's ancestors, but is pulling down that house, which was much advanced upon the ruins of that people, and their king.

3. Thou shalt call, and the Lord will an- Ifa. lviii.

fwer; thou shalt cry, and be shall answer, 9. Here am I. He is a God hearing prayers, and will in all ages be known by this title. We experience it; and our victories are greater bleffings when procured this way. Before the opening of this campaign, her Majesty appointed a publick fast, which was strictly observed by many; and so followed by continued prayers, as prefaged the bleffings conferred on us. Our God foon returned an answer by the battle at Ramillies; the earliness whereof did not a little conduce to our many acquisitions this year, and vindicate the early thanksgivings of the last. Must not this experience excite us to address God in every enterprize, as that whereon the greatest stress should be laid? Because he has enclined his ear unto Pfal. cxvi. me, I will call upon him as long as I live.

And the confideration of his fulfilling thefe Vot. II. three X. I will praise thee with the psaltery, even thy truth, O God. Nor upon a review of all the divine perfections aforementioned, have we less reason thankfully to proclaim,

Deut. v. God hath shewed his greatness and his glory.

II. I PROCEED to the second general head, viz. Be careful that your song be such as God requires, and will accept. If it be otherwise, we rob him of his due, we provoke him to blast our mercies, and forbear to perfect what he so wonderfully be-

gun. Therefore let our fongs be,

1. With true devotion. To which end let your minds be filled with higher thoughts of God, even fuch as impress you with a reverence of his facred name. Praise him also with your whole heart; for if your fouls are not employed, and deeply affected, external worship cannot please him, who is an infinite Spirit. Be watchful that this bleffed One have no rival in your praises; but let the honour you ascribe to the most victorious be, that God employed and diftinguished them as his instruments. So apprehend God's all-fufficiency, as to defire a faving interest in him above all temporal good; and whilst you rejoice in great things of this fort, be most joyful in your king; i. e. in his perfections, as he is your God in covenant. In your fongs prefer gospel-privileges, as what fix the chief value on our fuccess.

Pf. exlix.

fuccess, without which they had been in SERM. hazard. See that God be more endeared to X. you; and let love to him sweeten his praifes, and his works too. May our chief glorying be, that God is still among us; that these his wonderful works declare that he is Pfal. lxxv. near. Without such exercises true devotion.

is wanting in our folemnities.

2. With suitable resolves. Our praises are weak when we celebrate God's appearances, if they engage us not to holy purposes, purposes becoming the glory display'd in these his wonderful works. Therefore neglect not to bring your hearts to fuch refolutions as these: I'll place my hope in none below this almighty God, and stedfastly adhere to him, for I have feen his wonders: However tempted, I'll not provoke his wrath, whose vengeance on the greatest is thus fure and terrible: I'll yield myself to the conduct and disposal of this infinite wisdom: I'll be satisfied with, and keep my felf in the love of a God of this infinite goodness, and forbear abusing it: I'll believe his word with firmer affurance; and tho' promises and prophesies seem never so difficult, I'll expect their accomplishment: and when the church is in great danger, I will not despond, for God is faithful: Should his perfecuting enemies prosper long, I will quietly wait, for he is righteous, and will plead his cause in the proper feafon: In all my wants and ftraits, R 2 prayer XI. God hearing prayer: What benefits I receive by honouring him, I'll value as pledges of his truth, and employ faithfully in his fervice. These are vows suitable to the persections manifested by God in those excellent works, and proper to be made when we profess to exalt his praise; but vow all

with a dependance on Christ.

3. With a boly solicitude that you fail not to execute these becoming resolutions. you came prepared for this duty of thanksgiving, you thought of fuch returns, and defigned here to bind your fouls to the performance of them: therefore in the midst of your joy, be concerned lest your hearts betray you by any fecret referve, or hypocrify, in these your folemn transactions with God. Performance must discover the fincerity of your engagements; and without that, God will esteem your vows and fongs to be but mockery. Suitable actions are the truest praises in his account, who is our Lord as well as our Saviour; and if present impressions easily wear off, we Pf. lxxviii. had need be cantious; for if we keep not the

Pf. lxxviii. had need be cantious; for if we keep not the 10, 11. covenant of our God, we forget his wonders.

4. With a humble fense of God's rebukes,

and your necessary dependance on him for all Psal. cii. 1. future success and blessings, we have reason to sing of judgment and of mercy. It's true, mercy in our publick affairs does so exceed, that all private sufferers have cause to be greatly thankful; but yet intermixed rebukes

bukes must not be despised; especially such SERM. as are spiritual, or general; for both are testimonies of God's displeasure, and will rise to a greater height, if we repent not of those fins which cause them. Spiritual judgments are the forest, but unregarded by the profane, tho' they fuffer most in their effects. It's no just cause of raillery, but of deepest anguish and grief, that the ministry is become so ineffectual, that the very office is infulted; divine influences are so with-held, that whilst giddiness, vices, and confusion invade us, true wisdom, and the power of religion, decline; and this in a nation filled with light and wonderful deliverances: Nor ought we to flight fuch outward rebukes as the unhappy stop to our promising affairs in Spain, spoils and wastes in some of our plantations, merchants losses by fea, to the ruin of many trading families, and thereby a diminution of trade, which is the main support of England. Such calamities I call general, because they affect the body of the nation, in their consequences at least; and therefore we ought to be fenfible of God's anger, and humbled for our offences, as aggravated by the fignal benefits we receive. I mention not the delay of our descent by contrary winds, because it's yet unseen whether divine wisdom directed that most to the common burt or benefit.

BE also sensible, that the wonders you now joyfully commemorate, cannot set you

above

SERM. above the need of God's continued help; his XI. presence is as necessary to perfect, as to begin our salvation; and if he forsake us, our bassled enemy will succeed in following encounters, and our desolations become more severe by our past success. It depends on God's sentence what shall be the final issue of this war; and should we abuse the astonishing victories of this year, we may justly expect the next to be filled with

humbling disappointment. Therefore re-Pfal, ii. 11. joice with trembling; I mean not what will four or dispirit, but what excites you to approve yourselves to God, as the Lord of bosts; and effectually to watch against whatever may provoke him to depart from us, or weaken our dependance on him. He is ignorant of the corruption of human nature, who fees not that glorious successes are frequently made occasions of pride, vain-glory, fecurity in profane courses, trust in the arm of flesh, unjust usurpations, and oft times of persecution. And they are as little acquainted with the methods of providence, who expect not fevere judgments upon The due confideration of fuch abuses. both these, may well awaken a humble fear, lest we provoke God to change those wonderful bleffings, for which we now rejoice, into plagues as wonderful. But happy nation, if our present songs dispose to that holy temper, as shall fit us for a lasting happy peace, and for fuch repeated victories, till a peace of that kind is obtained.

A Thankf-



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## Thankfgiving-SER MON

Occasioned by the

Union of England and Scotland.

Preached May 1. 1707.

## ISAIAH XXVI. 15.

Thou hast increased the nation, O Lord! thou hast increased the nation; thou art glorified.

OME expound these words SERM.

as a judgment against Israel, XII.
others thus apply them to Asfyria: But the context directs us to take them for a

blessing acknowledged by Israel, upon the overthrow of the enemies of the church. I would not overlook this circumstance, for it adds to our joy, that God is increasing us, when he is reducing France, as a R 4 punish.

SERM. punishment of its barbarous attempts against XII. the reformed interest.

In the text you find,

I. A BENEFIT acknowledged, viz. the increase of the nation. As the diminishing of a people is a judgment, and oft threatned, so the multiplying of them is a pro-Zech. ix. mised bleffing: They shall increase. Hereby a nation becomes stronger, wealthier, and more fafe. All agree, that land and hands are the strength of a kingdom. It's recorded for a benefit, He increased his people greatly, and made them stronger than their enemies.

Pfal, cv. 14.

- 2. This benefit is ascribed to God as the author: Thou, O Lord, hast increased the nation. It was his work, and effected by his wonderful providence. The words are repeated, not only to express the certainty, but also the wonderfulness of this occurrence: it expresseth an admiring sense of the greatness of the mercy in its own nature, and that the methods of its accomplishment were amazing indications of the band of God; q. d. Thou, Lord, thou only hast done this; and that in such a signal manner, that all must ascribe it to thyself alone.
- 3. THE glory redounding to God by this benefit: Thou art glorified. By which two things are fignified. S Jon

If, THE glory of God appeared in the greatness of this work. His perfections did fhine. thine forth, and manifested themselves in SERM. effecting a thing so kind and difficult. This XII. work did praise bim; and upon it men ~~ have cause to speak of his power, to make Psal. cxlv. known his mighty acts, and the glorious ma- 10,11,12. jesty of his kingdom. How glorious is he who bowed minds, over-ruled measures, and fucceeded means, that all iffue in fo great and publick a mercy? This proclaims his greatness, wisdom, and goodness. When I consider the present dispensations towards France and our nation, God feems to exalt his praise in the accomplishment of those words in Ezek. xvii. 24. All shall know that I the Lord have brought down the high tree, and exalted the low tree; have dried up the green tree, and made the dry tree to flourish. I the Lord have spoken, and I bave done it.

adly, The nation, as thus increased, would subserve the glory of God, and contribute to his honour. Things in certain prospect are often express'd as present; and therefore it's no violence to these words, to apply them to what was afterwards to be accomplished, as an effect of this work: Thou art glorified; i. e. this increase of us in its nature tends to thy glory. Thy interest will be strengthned, thy worship and service promoted, thy glorious purposes effected, and thy kingdom be more enlarged. For we who are thus increased, are a people devoted to thee, bear thy name,

SERM. and are embark'd in thy interest, and there-XII. fore thou shalt be served by all this acces-

fion to our strength and number.

This day is appointed by her Majesty to celebrate a mercy of the same kind. Our nation is increased by the union of England and Scotland, into one kingdom; and we are come to offer our thanksgivings to God for this mercy, that he may now be gloristed as the wonderful author of it; and to present our supplications, that this union may be improved to his glory, according to the advantages given by it for that purpose.

THAT I may contribute my utmost in serving this so excellent design, I shall apply to the present occasion the text as explain'd; which I shall reduce to these heads:

I. Our nation is increased by a great accession to its number and territory.

II. This increase is by an incorporating union, which should make us one in affection.

III. This incorporating union is upon effential conditions freely stipulated by two distinct independent parties, and therefore to be kept inviolable.

IV. THE union thus made, is in itself a great mercy; for which we must be

thankful.

V. THE glory of God appears by this union, as it's his wonderful work; and therefore we should exalt him.

VI. THIS

VI. This union has a tendency to glo-Serm. rify God hereafter, and ought to be so im-XII. proved.

I. Our nation is increased by a great accession to its number and territory. true of Scotland, as will appear in the next head, but principally it must be said of England, into which Scotland is engrafted, and brings with it multitudes of people, and a great country. The addition is most properly made to England, in as much as its representatives in parliament are far more numerous, and the legislature is chiefly in our hands. All our peers retain their right to vote; nor are our commons diminished in number, or the way of election, or voters in fuch elections alter'd. have the same rights, only some former peculiarities are now more common. England indeed quits its name, as too narrow for its present enlargement; and as less honourable, because of its far later date, compared with Britain: But it still enjoys, under this engrafture, all the expressions of true greatness, and obtains the chief determination of those many added hands and territories, for the ends of government, and general advantage of Britain.

II. The increase is by an incorporating union. The ways by which nations are increased, are various: Some are increased

SERM. by conquest; but, bleffed be our God, Scot-XII. land doth not augment us in that way, tho' too many wickedly defired it. A nation is increased by receiving many foreigners to be denizons; these become subject to the nation's laws without any compact on its part, or referve on theirs. But this

reacheth not our case, as to the manner of uniting; tho' wife men think England a

Neh. ix. 23.

lofer by denying a general naturalization. A nation may increase by its own facundity; this is often mentioned as a bleffing: Their children multipliedst thou as the stars of beaven. But this is too flow to reach our instance; nor would it add to our territories. People may be made one in fome respects, by a fæderal union among distinct governments; but that's only to some certain purposes, and easily alter'd: But ours is far more, yea, it exceeds that union between these two kingdoms, as the same Princess ruled in both. For tho' we were join'd in the same common head, and enjoy'd mutually the benefit of natives in fundry matters, yet we remained two distinct kingdoms, independent on each other. We were two people under distinct parliaments, unaccountable for their respective actings, tho' fometimes mutually helpful by a good correspondence.

But by this incorporation, we are become one people, one and the fame kingdom: We have the same parliament as well as the same prince; and he, as to both na-SERM. tions, sustains but one person. We have XII. the same allies, the same friends and soes. In war and peace we are one party, and alike concerned. This union is fitly expressed: They shall be one in my hand; I will Ezek. make them one nation, and one king shall be execution, king to them all. May God prevent whatever can make the next words less applicable and predicting: And they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all.

THE union being thus identifying, Scotland may truly glory in the increase of its numbers; for being thus incorporated, they have just reason to say, We are a people more numerous, rich, and mighty: All that was call'd England's, is ours for our common defence, strength, renown, and counsel: It's become as our native country, and we are instated in its advantages, with no distinction from that people. We were one in Japhet, the promise to whom we both partake of, in being christians. We are one body by compact; either of which is more than being one originally in Gathel.

Inf. How becoming and necessary is an union of hearts, with an impartial concern for each others welfare?

THE nature of the union calls for this, to avoid the brand of *bypocrites*; the good purposes to be subserved by it, makes this temper

SERM. temper necessary, unless we'll be esteemed fuch fools as to defeat them; the vile things which are most likely to divide us, and excite envy, are base selfishness, and horrid bigotry. But what pretention can any make to prudence or christianity, who dare indulge either of these evils, to the reproach of what they call union, and to the danger of what should be cultivated as such? I would call that envious felfishness only foolish, if it were not more than devilish; for you grudge the weal of a fellow-member, and fret at the advantage of your own country, feeing the wealth and honour of every fingle person, contributes to make Britain more rich and honourable; and every good-natur'd fubject will find his account in the common good, while the envious, to his own damage, quarrels with God's beneficence, and his brother's right. As for bigotry, I have already called it borrid, because of its unreasonable grounds, and destructive effects. But if this can alienate the minds of our united nation.

it must be an *irreligious* heat for what none but knaves or ideots will call religion. We are the same in the essentials of christianity, and of the protestant religion too. Men shall find that these contain all that can make them religious in God's account: When both the established national churches contain the grounds of all true

christian love, other regards or dislikes must

proceed

proceed from carnal interest, or base incli- SERM. nations. If God will form mens spirits to answer the present providence, this incorporating union will put an end to prejudices, dispose to mutual forbearance, and inspire all with such generous and wise fentiments, as to regard the interests of others, as what the common weal is concerned in. We shall manage our selves worthy of this union, if we treat one another as members of the same body, fellowcitizens of the same commonwealth and country. Protestants greatly mistake the popish strength, if we think we are now become too confiderable to pray for that bleffing: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, Ifa. xi. and Judah shall not vex Ephraim; but 13, 14. they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines, they shall spoil them of the east together.

effential conditions, freely stipulated by two distinct independent parties, and therefore to be kept inviolable. It's not my province to dispute how far the representatives of a people are impower'd to make some change in a constitution for an apparently common good; and thereby of procuring advantages so far beyond what they recede from, that the general consent of the people, must, after a little experience, follow. The matter of nearest consequence is plain. Here's

XII. the two nations, upon which they coalesce:

Both recede from some things, reserve some things, and grant some things, as conditions of the union. England and Scotland were independent kingdoms, and absolutely free to treat. No claim is pretended, upon which consent on either side should be forced to the overtures made; each was at liberty to accept or refuse, as they sound themselves inclined by advantages or disad-

vantages.

THE Queen and the parliament of England, on the one part; and the Queen and the parliament of Scotland, on the other part, (for her Majesty sustained two persons) folemnly restipulate the conditions of the union for themselves, and their respective people. These conditions de jure are inviolable, and neither federating party has power over the other, to abate or alter them; yea, upon reducing the parliament of Scotland, which confifted of their own Queen, and the full representatives of that nation, the conditions engaged to them are not alterable by the parliament of Great Britain, without diffolving the union founded thereon. For as to their possessing of the stipulated benefits, their fixty-one referved members are guarantees, to fee the conditions executed, and no way authorized to alter them. And the English part of the parliament has no more power over Scotland.

Scotland, than before the union, except on SERM. supposition, that those conditions are ob- XII. ferved. Scotland may claim performance, or re-affume its constitution, in bar to the English part of the parliament, because it has no authority over them, but what was granted on the conditions of the contract; and the reason why their reserved fixty-one members have no power to alter those conditions, is this, They have no right to represent Scotland, or rule it in any thing, but by that contract wherein those conditions are established, as fuch, by the antient, supreme, entire legislative power of that kingdom, as well as by England. I grant, that faving those conditions, all that was Scotland, is subject to the Queen and parliament of Great-Britain. But none can imagine, that the Queen of Scotland put off that person, (for it's all one as if another Princess, distinct from her Majesty, had been queen) and about three hundred lords and commons had excluded themselves from a stated share in the legislature, on stipulated terms; and yet the English parliament, with fixty-one members from Scotland, shall alter those terms, without any legal consent of the former, yea, expresly against their consent, and the most solemn precautions. The case had greatly differed, if the whole parliament of Scotland had been continued, and joined to our English parliament: for if those by themselves, or not Vol. II. overSERM. over-voted by the English, had made alte-XII. rations, the Scots subjects must acquiesce, notwithstanding the words, fundamental and unalterable; for the legislature had remained entire, and in this contract had not covenanted with their own subjects, but only for them.

INF. They who repine at this union, from a concern for the safety of the church of Scotland, are highly blameable, unless they had ground for the hardest thoughts of the justice, truth, and wisdom of England.

THAT church has as great fecurity as man can give. Unjust force may violate the most facred bonds; but without this, that constitution is out of danger; neither is there equal probability of violence, as in former times: For a British parliament must renounce the revolution principle, before they can connive at it. They must expose the foundation of all our civil rights, whenever they encourage it. Will any future prince, claiming by the Act of Succession, trample on subjects loyal from principles, only to enable Jacobites to dethrone him; or, for the gratifying of fuch, provoke so great a body, who are not his subjects if this contract is dissolved? If he should defign arbitrary government, and restore prelates for the sake of their votes in the house of lords, can any man think, that Scots prelates will be admitted to vote

in a British parliament, where so very sew Serm. of their noble peers are allowed to sit? Or XI. what other service can be thought of, which fhall compensate the dangerous effects of restoring prelacy, against the genius of that people, and the securities given them? Should some of their nobility and gentry fret under the restraints of discipline, or be bribed by secular advantages; yet a great number will not so despise their own estates, as to be pleased to find their lands again wasted, and tenants destroy'd, by struggles about episcopacy, and by the barbarous insolencies which attended it heretofore.

AGAIN; few true Protestants are such bigots, as to disregard the sacredness of a solemn treaty, or for disputable things, to set mens consciences free to defend their rights, when they know such as design a popish king, will excite them to it, after others in the same design had prompted governours to irritate them by the violation of those rights.

THESE confiderations may quiet well-meaning people, and guard them against those tormenting fears, which such as would impose on them studiously create. If the Scottish church keep on good terms with God, by abiding faithful, and exercise due wisdom and moderation towards all, the change of their constitution is in no great danger to be attempted; and if it

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should,

SERM. should, he who loveth justice, and ab-XII. hors perfidiousness, is judge of the whole earth.

Pfal. xi. 5,

7. Ezek xvii. 16, 18.

IV. The union thus made, is in itself a great mercy, for which 'tis our duty to be thankful. General and great bleffings require our thanks, tho' others should abuse them to cursed purposes. This union is in itself a bleffing, both to England and Scotland jointly; 'tis so to each of them severally, and it has a far more general aspect.

I. It's a mercy to both lands jointly. Peace is hereby made our common and lasting bleffing. Peace between two nations, who for ages wasted one another: Rivers of blood have been spilt in their wars, and fuch wars commenced on small occasions, and were multiplied among them by their vicinity. He that reads the histories of both nations, shall find too much of this in the time of the Britains, Saxons, Danes, and after the Normans posses'd our country. What fierce struggles! by innumerable battles and bloody fights, they still remained instruments of mutual mifery and desolation. A review of those calamities must heighten our praises to the Almighty for this union. How vast are the reaches of providence, which laid the first. stone of it, when king Henry the VIIth matched the elder daughter to Scotland, rather than France? This grew up into a temple

temple of peace, when King James the Ist SERM. fucceeded to the English crown, as heir by XII. that marriage; but now is the top-stone laid after no small shake, and when we were in danger of the return of former mischief. Who can overlook the feason of this mercy? Both kingdoms had lately an afpect, threatning war upon the first occasion: Scotland too loudly prepared for it, and England was not too shy or backward. The wifest could fee no medium between wars and union, and the last scarce possible to be accomplished; yet then does God appear and grants us this amazing favour. He prevents the fatal separation of the kingdoms; he stops the war which had brought with it inconceivable miseries, whoever obtain'd the victory: yea, above this, he more nearly unites them, and makes them incapable of future wars, unless the one or the other becomes infatuated.

THE protestant religion (our common concern) receives by this union an addition of strength; and the succession of the crown, as by law established in England, is secured in all her Majesty's dominions, and received into Scotland without those fetters on the prince, which are inconsistent with a monarchy as happily limited as the English

liberties require.

BOTH nations are safer from the attempts of foreign enemies, and united Britain is greater in strength, and influence S 3 abroad,

SERM. abroad, by its unsuspected confidence in it-XII. felf. The civil government, and the liberties of the subjects, find in this union a

more effectual preservative. England has bid fair towards enflaving Scotland, in feveral former reigns, and very effectually accomplished it before the end of king James the last, even to military execution, without any legal process. Scotland, when enflaved, was fitted to bring us into the fame bondage (tho' formerly faved by them) two and twenty thousand foldiers were at once appointed to march to what places the king directed, i.e. to England, whose liberties were doomed to the like infults, by princes and preachers too, and prevented by a mere feries of miracles. The like danger must return, whenever an aspiring prince govern'd us as separate kingdoms. Oh! what thanks are due to our God, that hereafter we must keep and lose our civil rights, as one body, and not be play'd as tools of flavery against each other. With the liberty of the subject, the legal rights of the monarchs are better fecured against republican whims (no unfit character as Britain is circumstantiated) and their perfons more strongly defended against all enemies, whilst they destroy not the legal constitution: For its past doubt with all, except the ignorant and malicious, that the zeal of a Scotch Presbyterian for our regulated monarchy, is equal to that of the most prelatical:

prelatical. Finally, this union enlarging SERM. the body by a greater number of godly perfons, we may hope, from their joint prayers, to reap many national bleffings. Further marks of the divine presence may be expected in Britain united, if not prevented by suture backslidings. These, these are to be feared; nothing is so certain to make this signal bleffing to issue in a judgment upon the whole island.

2. THE union is a mercy to each nation severally. England has no reason to despise it, for it shuts a back door, at which foreigners enter'd to diffress this land. Such oft prevailed also with the Scots, to divert us from great enterprizes abroad, and at other times forced us to return to defend ourselves, when our conquests were almost perfected. How often has France, by a Scottish invasion, prevented our triumphs, and at last become capable, not only to recover what she had lost to us, but to wrest from us the large provinces to which we had the justest title. This union in former ages, had prevented the French usurpation, and kept her monarchs innocent, who, for want of it, have been so terrible to Europe.

By this union our dominions are enlarged; and tho' Scotland share in the benefit, yet its strength is as an appendage to England; for as we have that great superiority in parliament, the disposal of men and treasure will be chiefly in our hands, and our

S 4 influence

SERM. influence proportionable. England is ag-

grandized by the ingrafture of a nation, fo I famous for warriors and men of fense; and, which is more, a people noted among foreign churches, for purity of religion, eminent for glorious martyrs, and for men enjoying the most intimate communion with God, and more of a prophetick spirit, than is known elsewhere in these later ages.

Scotland is not without its benefit, and will partake of the fatness of that tree into which it is engrafted. It enjoys a freedom of trade in our plantations, a prospect of improving the product of art and nature, and equal right to all employs which had been less a snare to the conscientious, and fafer to the church, had they exempted themselves from that engine of profaneness, the facramental test; to which I give this hard title, because multitudes owning their unfitness, yet rather than miss an employ, will yenture on the danger of receiving it. Some I fear take it against their consciences; and the greatest sticklers for it, defign that the profanest shall enjoy the places, rather than men of tender consciences shall be admitted. Moreover, Scotland is guarded against some intestine divisions; the cloud which hung over them about the fucceffion is scatter'd, and their populace hope to share in the English liberties.

3. This mercy extends beyond this island of Great Britain. Ireland is safer

from

from the bloody affaults of the popish natives. Our protestant brethren in remoter XII. parts, will find us more able to defend them against papal combinations, and to relieve them from violence: Oh, may France meet with the first experiment! I hope practical godliness will gain among our plantations, and whatever greater things providence may design by his people, for the ruin of antichrist. Unity among the reformed, or spreading his gospel in the world, Britain, as united, is more fitted to subserve.

Exhort. BE thankful and rejoice with fuitable apprehensions of this mercy. They are unfit to estimate blessings, who despise this as small; they are grosly ignorant, or enemies to their country and the protestant religion, who fret at it as calamitous. you expound Isa. ix. 3. according to our translation, you'll find in other ages the envious refentments of fuch common bleffings: Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not encreased the joy. Let us, by a chearful gratitude, acquit ourselves from such base returns to God, to the Queen, and the instruments who contributed to it from honest motives. The good and great uses which it naturally tends to ferve, demand our present joy, whatever ill purposes some men may pervert it to, and however base the springs of their activity have been.

SERM. XII.

V. God's glory appears in this union as his wonderful work, for which he is to be exalted. The defireableness of it seemingly engaged many princes on this attempt, tho' I doubt it lay at the heart of very few before king William (a prince to whom these lands are indebted for the foundation of all that's valuable.) The effecting thereof God reserved for her Majesty, with other marks of his pecular favour: But this enterprize was attended with too great difficulties to be removed by human might and wisdom. Many were the persons concerned, when few had the publick advantage fo near them as their own. Separate interests, prejudices, and opposite parties, would omit no contrivance, either to baffle or to spoil it for continuance. Emulation, pride, jealoufy, wrath, revenge, covetoufness, and other lusts, in such a transaction, would be active. And the weak (tho' honeftly minded) must entertain with some disorder a change so great and unexperienced; but divine providence breaks thro' all impediments, and ferves its purposes by mens virtues and vices too. God restrained some men, and spirited others, and at last brought a sufficient number (from very different ends) to accomplish this great affair.

> Inf. How exalted must God be in all our thoughts! Adoring apprehensions be-

come

with holy reverence, admire him as the XII. God of the spirits of all flesh; the governor among the nations. He sets the bounds will all swife in counsel, and can dispose that to 28. Deut. affair, which to man appears the chiefest Pfal. lxv. obstacle. What an hostile aspect had the 7. Scots Act of security, yet that's the most apparent cause of this union. Sanctify him in your hearts, who enlargeth the na- Job xii. tions, and straightens them again.

VI. This union has a tendency to glorify. God hereafter, and ought to be so improved. This affair is too great to fail of important consequences. God hereby affords great means to be improved for his glory, in a general reformation, and the increase of the power of religion. If these are neglected, he can soon dissolve our bonds. If this union be abused to wicked ends, he will vindicate his honour, by sending an evil spirit to divide the nation, Judges ix. 23. and make us irreconcileably pursue the destruction of each other.

Inf. WE see what Britain should pray for, and chiefly endeavour, viz. that God be glorified by the use made of this union. Let him be glorified as a God of love, by union in affection, notwithstanding tolerable differences in modes and sentiments. If

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SERM. this fail, divided exasperated hearts will XII. render an external union useless and dangerous. Glorify God as a God of truth and justice, by keeping covenant. A breach of a treaty thus solemn, will brand the authors for persidiousness, and bring down the punishment of this, and whatever of

this kind is unrepented of.

GLORIFY God by promoting his interest. This is the way to fecure his special prefence, which is a kingdom's shield and glory; whereas, if he depart, our united strength will render us neither more fafe, nor more confiderable. The interest of God among his churches, confifts in purity of doctrine, worship, discipline, and conversation. No man is a protestant, who denies that the purity of each of these is in proportion to its conformity to the rule of the gospel; for that's one of the chief principles by which we are diffinguished from Papists. If this interest of God be prostituted or neglected, the glorifying him is an bypocritical pretence, and we may justly look to be abandoned by him after all his wonders.

HAPPY Britain, as this purity increafeth: Misery approacheth, as this abates. What a plague will that part of the nation be to the other! which shall infect it by errors in doctrine, superstition in worship, remissings in discipline, or scandalous offences in conversation? What a blessing

shall

shall that part be! which most succeeds in Serm. rendring the other more sound in the faith, XII. and more conformable to the gospel rule in worship, discipline, and holiness of life. Herein the nation will find the ballance of its greatest loss or gain by this union.

I know the corruption of human nature favoureth the worst attempts, and makes declensions from the rule to be far more probable. This will strongly plead for errors, pompous formality, and freedom from the yoke of Christ. When the factors for these are great and active; when the proposed bribes are honour, estates, and power; then to be determined by the naked authority of Christ, requires divine assistance; for sless and blood will command indulgence beyond the utmost opposition of human power.

Exhort. THEREFORE pray earnestly for God's assistance, that you may be saithful and watchful in the desence and advancement of the kingdom of his Son. There's need of prayer, because discouragements will exceed your own power; though not the grace of Christ, which is all-sufficient. Watchful attention is necessary, that all opportunities of service may be taken, temptations to backslidings soon discerned, and apostasy may not gradually prevail, thro' a neglect of its first beginnings. A forward activeness for Christ is contained in our baptismal yow and dedication: The

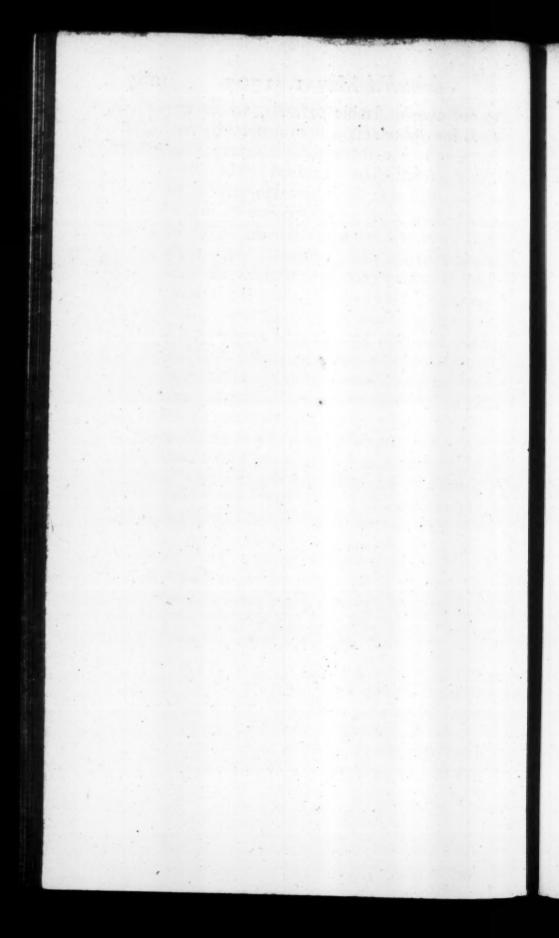
bonds

SERM. bonds are repeated in every approach to the XII. Lord's table. This begun the reformation, ~ and continued it against those violent attempts which threatned the extirpation of it in most places. As the spirit of the reformers declines (which too fadly appears in all the churches) the enemies of true religion may hope to prevent its descending to posterity, notwithstanding all God's appearance for it hitherto. Great Britain will foon become little and miferable, if besides those who sit down with their gettings by this union, many others become fo secure by it, as to grow indifferent about the concern of Christ, as head of the church.

> WHEN any are tempted to this Laodicean frame, they have reason to consider, that fatan and his agents will be always restless to undermine religion, as their abhorrence. The Lord Jesus has committed his interests as a trust to his people in every age, both for trial of their fidelity, and to put on them the bonour of ferving his glorious defigns in this world; yea, also to make them meet for an eternal crown, when he will be ashamed of every apostate, and be a terror to them, as objects of his forest indignation. Must it not also occur to the thoughts of many, if they prove false to their redeemer, How can we behold the faces of our faithful and zealous ancestors? How can we account

to our own miserable posterity, whom we SERM. fink into blindness and irreligion, by not XII. transmitting to them those advantages for falvation which we received? Moreover, God is still able, by external judgments, to mark those families who violate his bonds. and account his interest too despicable or dangerous for their concern. May these confiderations awaken a zeal for the glorifying of God in fuch instances as he will account fo, from his devoted fervants.---May this zeal be managed regularly, according to mens stations, under the direction of God's laws, and of man's too, as far as they are subordinate. May this zeal extend to all wherein the kingdom of our Redeemer confifts, and not to trifles or things tolerable. This is the zeal I must cherish by a faithful warning, or be altogether filent.







# Christian Sincerity:

## FUNERAL-SERMON,

Occasioned by the DEATH of the

Rev. Mr. Thomas Doolittle, M. A.

Preached June 1. 1707.

#### 2 C o R. i. 12.

For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in this world.



E are met to improve the SERM. death of your excellent pastor. XIII. You have often, heretofore, pray'd with fuccess for his recovery, and praifed God for

it; but at last the vessel is broken, that contained the precious treasure, by which VOL. II. you

SERM. you were enriched for many years. I XIII. could think of no subject more for your benefit, than what this text presents, and which is inforced by his example who was your guide.

St. Paul, in these words, first acquaints the Corintbians what his comfort was,

ver. 9. when under the fentence of death, and in the repeated dangers which he had escap'd, and hoped to be delivered from, whilst his life was necessary to the church; not that he expected or desired to be always delivered. To. ed, for he longed to be dissolved, and be with

ver. to. ed, for he longed to be dissolved, and be with Phil. i. Christ, as far better for himself. What had encouraged him under foreseen danger, and gave him hope of deliverance till his work was finished, afforded him a triumph over death, when he afterwards be-

Tim. iv. held it unavoidable and nigh: I have 7, 8. fought a good fight, I have finished my course, and kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.

ver. 6. Thus he rejoiced when he tells you, I

am ready to be offered, &c.

ver. 10. the faints ought to thank God for his prolonged life, and continue to pray for it. For tho' their concern for him did not afford him that great joy, which he received from the testimony of his conscience; yet being he was a person so upright and useful, and had his conscience testifying it, even in sight of death, and rejoiced in that testimony

testimony above all worldly advantages; SERM. his life must needs be valuable, and his XIII. death be a loss fit to affect the church, and to be matter of sorrow, if not for a while prevented by their supplications. He surther hints, that prayers for such a man were likely to be accepted, yea, and be successful for the time his ministry was designed for use:

I MIGHT improve this last head to excite people to pray for faithful ministers when their lives are in hazard, whether by persecutors, diseases, or otherwise; and to be as willing to offer hearty thanksgivings to God, when he preserves their lives. Not were it improper to call ministers to be so useful and faithful, that people may be inclined to pray for them, and that with hope of success. But I proceed to the text, where St. Paul, speaking of himself, tho' in the plural number, gives us,

I. THE character of every true christian in his station, and more especially in that of the ministry.

II. THE way by which this becomes evident to one's felf; this is by the testimony of his own conscience, especially when awaken'd by a serious prospect of death.

III. THE joy this, when evidenced, affords in the nearest prospect of death and dangers. This is his rejoicing.

SERM. I. The character of every true christian XIII. in his station, and more especially in that of the ministry. What the apostle mentions of himself, as witnessed by his conscience, is effential to all true and real christians in their respective places; and profes'd by all fuch, as well as by them who are dispensers of the gospel. But the sphere of a minifter's motion being larger, and more difficult, his fidelity is more tried; his work, temptations, opportunities, and dangers are far greater; he has not only the common duties of a private christian to discharge, but those also which are proper to his office. Therefore to have acquitted himself faithfully therein, is matter of greater joy, and this from the greater hazard of unfaithfulness, as well as from the hope of higher rewards, if his trust be uprightly discharged.

### SECT. I.

Ist Obs. To have a conversation in this world, not by fleshly wisdom, but in simplicity, godly sincerity, and by the grace of God, is the property of every real christian and godly minister.

My principal work under this head, will be to explain the character in the several parts of it. The doctrine expresseth the necessity of it, when I call it the property of every true christian; for this imports,

he

he is not a real, but only a nominal chri- SERM. flian, to whom it belongs not. That this XIII. truth needs explication, the behaviour of most, who wear a christian name, may convince you; for furely they have very falle notions of it, or they could not fo generally pretend to the christian hope, when so few lead this conversation; yea, when most despise it as a mean thing, and visibly contradict it by falshood, tricking, carnal selfishness, and the prostitution of sacred things to vile purposes, as openly as if they scorn'd a disguise, after any vile turn is served. heathen would abhor that juggling and infincerity which is so commonly practised, as to cease to be a wonder. This evil I would detect and expose, by explaining a true christian conversation in opposition thereto; and shall treat of it, as what is the character of every christian as such; because it may be more extensively beneficial, and may be eafily improved by ministers in what's peculiar to them: for they can be no godly ministers, who are not real christians; and if they are real christians, their fincerity will extend to the faithful discharge of their special office. The character to be infifted on, does not only oppose that of the openly profane, but the several excellencies of it far exceed what mere nominal christians do practise, or arrive at, yea, are opposite thereto as contraries. And I shall chuse to distinguish faithful believers from

SERM. from *hypocrites*, rather than from men no-XIII. toriously wicked, by the several parts of the character, which are four; one negative, and three positive.

1. THE true christian's conversation is

not by fleshly wisdom.

2. His conversation is in simplicity and godly sincerity.

3. THE scope and tenor of his conver-

fation in this world is fo.

4. ALL this is by the grace of God.

1. The true christian's conversation is not

by fleshly wisdom.

OTHER negatives are implied in the text, as double-mindedness, infincerity, partiality, inconstancy, morality merely natural; but he mentions only this of fleshly wisdom, because this is so reputable with the world, this is so commonly manifested, this includes much of the others, and is the most likely and general ground of all base hypocritical practices.

HYPOCRITES walk by fleshly wisdom, whatever pretence they make to the Spirit: This forms their temper, fixeth their ends, and directs their course and methods: this, and not spiritual wisdom; this, and not the word of God, is their light and rule. But the faithful christian walks not by fleshly wisdom, nay, he act-

eth contrary to it.

(1.) HE walks not by fleshly wisdom: He pursues not that interest as his chief good,

good, which the wisdom of the flesh pre- SERM. fers; nor guides his practice by the max- XIII. ims of carnal politicks, however celebrated; he'll not do evil, that good may come Rom. iii. of it; he gives honour to the great, but 8. they shall not make his creed, nor direct Acts iv. his conscience; he wishesh well to the 19. multitude, but runs not with them to do evil; he is diligent for a subsistence, but dares not fell his foul by wicked courfes to gain the world; he confults not flesh and Gal. i. 6. blood, whether he must perform his duty; no, nor suffers flesh to determine what is his duty. God's statutes are fet before him, Pfal. xviii. as the rule by which he is resolved to act, 22. and justly, with Paul, accounts such injurious, who think of him as if he walked 2 Cor. x.2. according to the flesh.

(2.) THE real christian's actings are con-

trary to the wisdom of the flesh,

THE world brands him for a fool, because he facrificeth his secular interests to his fidelity to Christ, and postpones them to his heavenly hopes in his solicitous cares and labours. He, with Moses, chuseth ra-Heb. xi. ther to suffer affliction with the people of 25, 26. God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin; and esteems the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. The wisdom of the slesh directs him to believe no more than he can comprehend by reason, but he will believe what God has revealed by the Col. ii. 2. word, though above his comprehension.

That

SERM. That wisdom invents modes of worship XIII. which are plaufible and pompous, but he will abide by Christ's institutions, however Col. ii. 18. plain or mean they appear to flesh: That wildom decries all as unnecessary to religion, which exposeth to great labour, charge, or danger; but he abhors the maxims, which would abate the utmost pains, expence, or affliction, that attends the power of vital religion, which he knows to be contrary to the indulging of the flesh. The wisdom this good man is governed by, is of another fort, and repugnant to that of the flesh; even that which is from above, and described Fames i. 8. Under the conduct thereof, he despiseth the wisdom of the flesh, as sensual and devilish, yea, as what he is fure will be found at last to be confummate folly,

2. The conversation of the true christian

is in simplicity and godly sincerity.

This part is most directly opposite to hypocrify; and the life and frame of the false christian is the plain reverse of it in every particular; he is double-minded as to

Jam. i. 8. God and man; he has a beart that is double, for he ferves ambitious, covetous, voluptuous purposes, under spiritual pretences, and most friendly assurances. Instead of simplicity, which he abhors, he is doubling and deceitful. Dissimulation he is clothed with, sincerity he is a stranger to. Hold his best actions to the sun, and they will will appear grofly faulty, tho' now under SERM. disguise; his prayers are without faith and XIII. fervour; his charitable works are without love. Were all fecrets manifest, as they will be in the day of judgment, the hypocrite would be hateful to all; and the more. fo, for his cloak of godliness. How full of allow'd enmity, self-confidence, envy, pride, atheistical thoughts, aversion to duty, covetousness, are these painted sepulchres, as Christ Mat. xxiii. calls them. He who will judge the fecrets 27. of men, can charge them with lying, cheating, mocking at fin, quarrelling with providence, contempt of ferious religion, and gratifying one lust or other. Sometimes they are perceived by others to be in the Acts viii. gall of bitterness, and bonds of iniquity, to which they contribute by their profane expressions of divine things, carnal compliances when tempted, and their final apostafy when tried by a great bribe, or severe persecution. But the conversation of a found believer is,

(1.) In simplicity: ἐν απλότη]ι; what he does is in singleness of heart; he is what he Eph. vi. 5. seems, he meaneth what he saith, his designs are honest, his eye is single, he may Luke xi. be trusted, for he will not deceive. He is 34-as facoh, a plain man; he intends to be 27. what he professeth, and to do what he engageth to God and man; he is a Na-Johni.47-thanael, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile allowed; he instanceth simplicity,

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18.

SERM. in his chief end, which is the glory of God; XIII. in his governing rule, which is the alone word of God; and in not having regard to any iniquity in his heart. He is candid and open, abhorring all unjust reservations and equivocations, when his prudence is most fully exercised. His charity is apt to make him too credulous, for he judging by himfelf, hopeth the best of all men.

(2.) In fincerity. This word is of near alliance with the former: in its derivation it fignifies a thing that will bear the light of the fun-beams when examin'd, and not prove counterfeited or unvaluable:

with the unleavened bread of fincerity and truth. We are instructed by this word, that the conversation of a true christian is so real, so just, so well-order'd, as will bear the search, and be approved upon strict examination; whence, in gospel acceptation, the upright man is called a perfect man.

Pf. xxxvii. His mind is pure, his graces are not counterfeits, but realities. He believes with the Job i. 1. Pet. iii. beart, with a faith unfeigned; he loves God and Christ, and his brethren, in truth and Rom. x. 9. in deed. There is that of reality in his graces and obedience, as answers the gospel John iii. rule, whereby it fixeth the condition of its

faving benefits, though they reach not the extent of what is his duty by the precepts of the gospel.

THIS

defires God to fearch his inwards; he appeals to God as to the way he takes; O

Lord, thou knowest. As he approves himfelf chiefly to God in what he undertakes, Jer. xv.
fo, in many cases, he is forced, and may 15, 16.
fay, with St. Paul, God is my witness.

THE best man indeed is very short of 5. legal perfection; were God strict to mark iniquities, and judged us by the law of works, no man could fland at the bar before him, nor be justified in any performance or at-Ps. cxxx. tainment; his person, his best actions, and 3most improved graces, need forgiveness for their imperfections, and the merits of Christ to make them acceptable. He is fincere in his humble acknowledgments of this; his heart is truly broken in the sense of his guilt and many defects; he really admires the riches of grace, and from his foul esteems and relisheth spiritual bleffings, as most agreeable to his defires, wants, and inclinations. Sincerity is that which he mindeth, as that without which all his feeming graces are nullities, and greatest performances vain. This the weakest saint is not without, for his prevailing judgment and choice are for God, as his chief end; for Christ, as his only Saviour; for heaven and covenant-bleffings, as his chief good; and for gospel obedience and holiness, as the perfection of his nature, and the way to possess eternal bleffings.

His

SERM. His principal regards to God in his acXIII. tions, do further instance this sincerity; for
he is awed by the eye of God when alone,
as if observed by a multitude; as he makes
conscience of his fecret actions, yea, of his
exercise. 9. very thoughts as well as of publick actions,
Ps. cxix. he approves himself to God, and is fatisfied with his approbation wherein he is
censured by men; and his principal care is
Gal. i. 10. to please God, whether men be pleased or
no.

(3.) This simplicity and sincerity is godly; 78 348; the simplicity and sincerity of God. If you take it for an hebraism (which this apostle often useth) it notes the eminency and excellency, as well as the reality of these; but if you take it in the common sense, it notes an integrity, of which God is the exemplar, appointer, author, and approver. The christian, in his measure, is Ps. xxv. 1. conformable to God, who is good and up-

right. His perfect holiness, truth, righteousness, and goodness, include what is simplicity and sincerity in men. The blessed
God hath commanded this, and by his
Ezek. Spirit creates it in the elect. The new heart
xxxvi. 26. which he gives, is a clean and honest mind,
whence the power of upright ends, and an
inclination to honest methods, proceed.
Sincerity is what God highly approves;
he loveth it as his own image, and thereby distinguisheth his peculiar servants in or-

Pf. xevii. der to future rewards: Gladness is sown for

for the upright in heart: They shall dwell SERM. in his presence; whereas the hypocrite is XIII. an abomination to him, and the hottest place of hell will be his portion. The Tit. i. 16. gospel, as a rule of judgment, determines Mat. xxiv. the final state of professors, not merely as 57. being sinners, for all are so; nor yet as perfect and sinless, for none are such; but who are sincere, who are hypocritical professors, by this shall they be discriminated. Much more might be added, to convince you that sincerity is no mean, dead, formal thing; but that it is of a divine nature, alliance, original, and tendency.

3. THE scope and tenor of a christian conversation in this world, is in simplicity and godly sincerity, &c. The scope and course of it is so, and not an occasional step; 'tis so, notwithstanding all the discouragements in this world, and for the

whole time he abides in it.

The bypocrite's religion and obedience is limited, partial, and uneven; he is devout, just, or good, but by the by; 'tis not his business, for that's to gratify his lusts. His goodness is by starts, 'tis not his stated walk; for his conversation is in Eph. ii. 3. his lusts, his walk is after the steps: He Rom. viii. is seemingly improved in some things, but hath not regard to all the parts of godliness: such calls to service he complies with, as are enforced by secular advantages; but without these, the plainest calls are generally disobeyed.

SERM. disobeyed. He may be somewhat exact in XIII. some duties, but neglects the most material in the station where God has placed him. Towards some men, and in some company, he behaves himself well, but is disorderly with others. When he meets not with temptations, he seemeth reformed, but changeth his course when strongly assaulted, that will and seldom recovers: His goodness is as the

Hof. xiii. and feldom recovers; His goodness is as the morning cloud, it has no root, therefore dies before his life is finished.

But in the real christian, fincerity runs as a line throughout his life, and commands the scope of it upon all occasions. The words are, drassdonner in 70 x00 µ2; we conversed, lived, and behaved, in a continued stated manner, in our passage through the world, in godly sincerity. This is an eminent part of the character of a real christian, and amounts to these six things:

Acts xxiv. conscience: Herein I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence towards God, and towards men. This he resolveth, and studies how to do it; this he earnestly intends, by striving against what may hinder it, and taking hold of whatever is helpful to maintain religion towards God, and righteousness towards men; he is at pains to have conscience well informed, and tender; and is careful to secure his peace, by avoiding what it justly condemns; 'tis his purpose

purpose to be able to say, My heart shall SERM. not reproach me so long as I live. XIII.

(2.) HE endeavoureth to perform every duty, as well as fome; he faithfully fets 6. himself to be holy in all manner of conver- 1Pet.i.15. sation. No grace nor measure of it would he neglect, nor live in the omission of any known duty; he accounts himself obliged to keep his heart, as well as outward ac-Prov. iv. tions; to forgive his enemies, as well as to 23. requite his friends. The duties of his general and particular calling, he will be employed in, as one walking in all the com- Luke i. mandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. A fincere veneration of each is witnessed by his rejecting of none; he allows not himself by sloth to fall into any error against the faith, nor to violate the law by difregard to any of its precepts, but keeps an ear open to all God's commands, tho' hard and chargeable fervice be appointed. Is he a minister? He declares the whole A&s xx. counsel of God, whoever is displeased; he 27. corrupts not the word of God to serve a 17. base turn; but as of sincerity, but as of 1 Tim. iii. God, in the fight of God, speaketh he in 15. Christ; by rule he behaveth himself in the house of God. The same does the private christian in all relations, and hides his face from no part of his duty.

(3.) THE *scope* and tenor of his behaviour is fincere. As *Enoch he walks with God*, Gen. v. and labours to be in the fear of the Lord <sup>22</sup>.

SERM. all the day long; his zeal is confiftent with XIII. love, and charity does not extinguish his zeal; his religion is not by fits, but steady; Heb. xiii. fincerity is his way of living; Pray for us, for we trust we have a good conscience in all things, willing to live honestly. His way is uniform, and righteousness is his custom; if he turn aside, he bemoaneth it, and is Pf. xli. 4. restless till he return; he prays that God Hof.xiv.2. would heal his backflidings, and restore him. His religion is not left in the church, but carried with him to his house, to his closet, to his shop, to every place; his godliness ends not with the sabbath, but takes hold on him thro' the week; he is good in health, as well as in fickness; and he acteth fincerely with all men, as well as with Pf. xxxix. fome men; his guard is as strict in wicked company, as if the holiest men were prefent; he'll not offend his weak brother, but deny himself in much of his liberty, rather 1 Cor. viii, than be a fnare to him. Power gives him no leave to oppress; he with-holds not 12, 13. what's right from the worst man, no not from his enemies; he dare not impose on the ignorant, but deals as justly with such, as if they were persons of the deepest understanding.

Object. How then comes the apostle to say, in this text, That his conversation was in sincerity more abundantly toward the Corinthians?

Answ. He laboured abundantly among Serm. this people in the work of the gospel, and XIII. yet was so far from any mercenary design, that he supported himself by the work of his hands, when he had a right to a supply 1 Cor. ix. from them: So that they, of all men, had 12-15 least reason to question his integrity.

5. HE will act with fincerity under the greatest temptations and disadvantages.

This world is full of fnares and allurements; its company, its business, its amusements, are not without hazard. place where religion is generally abhorred, and men persecuted for the profession of it; the helps to piety are very few, and a plain man is generally fcorn'd, and made a prey of. This world is fo full of sharpers, that honest methods will not always give a livelihood; and men of all callings fo falle and undermining, that a man of integrity cannot defend himself. Yet as bad as this world is, and as ill treatment as the man of fimplicity meets with, the apostle faith, My conversation is in simplicity and godly sincerity, and not by fleshly wisdom, even in Every real christian follows his this world. example, in prospect of the comfort it ministers through the usefulness of it to the commonweal, and God's approbation of it by his commands, example, and rewards.

THEREFORE the fincere man labours to keep himself unspotted from the world; Vol. II. U when

SERM. when the wicked entice him, he disdains XIII. the bribes, and watches against the allurements of sin: With Lot he keeps clean in a ments of sin: With Lot he keeps clean in a filthy place, and is vexed with the abominations he would reform, but cannot. He is content to be gazed at as a monster among the bewitched crowd, and to pass thro' the world as a stranger, who wears a garb, speaks a language, walks by a law, is accustomed to such manners, pursues such designs, and seeks a home, which the world

despifes and abhors.

fuch gratifications of the flesh as would pollute him, and to bear what's most ungrateful to it, rather than feem to be asham'd of Christ in his truth, interest, or members. When reproaches, frowns, loss of goods, prisons, yea, death come in his way, he has reckon'd on them, and counts them no strange thing; he is at a point, the Lamb he will follow, his covenant he must keep. He endeavoureth to get, and use prudence, and to avoid all real indifcretion, that he may prevent fuch mischiefs as ill men defign against him, and are more probable to effect, because they scruple nothing. this case, where innocent prudence will not preserve him, he commits himself to God for shelter and support, as seems good in his eyes. Finally, he is diligent in his calling, but reckons that God thinks that enough

SINCERITY inclines him to the crucifying himself to the world, and thereby to deny

Rev. xiv.

enough for him, which is gotten honestly, Serm. and that more would be dangerous. He XIII. is thankful for so much esteem and interest as may render him greatly useful; but he will use no unjust or fordid methods to obtain or continue it. And if God permits men of baser tempers to undermine him by whispers, surmises, or viler arts, he refers himself to the providence of God, as knowing he will vindicate him as far as the service designed by him requires, and carry on his work by other instruments, accepting the upright desire and behaviour of the blasted, instead of service.

(6.) HE maintains his fincere conversa-

tion to the last.

He is faithful unto death. Whilst he is Rev. ii. in this world, he continues his integrity, to: and holds on his way; a prolong'd life gives him no release, for his covenant-dedication was unto his last moments. During his present state he adheres to God, abides in Christ, submits to his rule, and defireth to serve his purposes. The real christian is perfuaded, that beginning well without perseverance, will aggravate his woe, and that all who shall be saved, must endure to Mat. xxiv. the end; therefore he is firmly resolved, in 13. the strength of Christ, to finish well, and die in the Lord. His race being for life, he runs, and faints not; his warfare not being decided before death, he fights fo as to overcome at last. His earnest prayer and hope

16.

SERM. hope is to be fincere, and without offence, XIII. till the day of Christ. He is not without a holy fear till he hath worked out his fal-Phil i. 10. vation. He is watchful till his time of probation is finish'd, that his heart depart not from God, that he be not entangled in the pollutions of the world; that he turn not from the holy commandment, nor defert 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21. the profession of faith. He is careful to Heb. x. leave this world, prepared and ripened for 23. a better country; and therefore thinks it not enough to be kept from apostasy, but endeavoureth by added grace to grace, to make his election fure; and fo to have a certain and an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Fesus Christ.

> THE fourth part of the character of the real christian and godly minister, is, That

his conversation is by the grace of God. z Pet. i. 5-10. THE grace of God is taken chiefly for Acts xviii. his special favour: He help'd them much 27. who had believed through grace: Also for the peculiar gifts and effects of God's special favour, 2 Pet. iii. 18. Grow in grace.

John i. We have received grace for grace. faving endowments are called grace, because they are free gifts flowing from God's undeferved favour, and are evidences of our interest in his special favour. Sometimes this word grace is defigned at once to express both the kindness of God and the effects; He resisteth the proud, but giveth

grace

the gospel. These are the principal senses XIII. of the grace of God, and what the apostle intendeth. As for extraordinary gifts, and the common effects of grace for degrees of reformation, which are short of a regenerating work; they are still grace, but reach not the apostle's sense in my text; whereas, 1. God's special savour; 2. Inherent grace; and, 3. The gospel, must be intended.

This part confummates the diffinction between the fincere christian, and the hypocrite. What the christian is, what he attains and performs, is by the grace of God; he is more than a mere moral man, as to temper and state, and acteth beyond him, and with another respect to supplies of

grace; of which hereafter.

The bypocrite's devoutest and best actions spring from nature, or at best from common grace: nor is he an object of God's special kindness, or is God's savour what he most desires. His graces or virtues are called so but equivocally: when he performs what's most excellent, 'tis not from a vital principle; the Holy Spirit gives no such special affistance, as he does to saints. His heart is unchanged, his spirit unrenewed; he derives not strength from Christ by dependance on him, as a vital head; nor acteth by communications from him, as an united member. As God has no delight in him, so he

SERM. takes not his highest satisfaction in God: XIII. but his chief good is what gratifies his carnal felf, which is his chief and ultimate end. And thus, it's evident, he doth not live, nor behave (fo the word for converfing, in my text, is often render'd) by the grace of God.

But the real christian hath his conversa-

tion by the grace of God,

1. By the special favour of God.

Note, THAT God is of infinite power to change, convert, establish, and assist, &c. This power is exerted in fuch spiri-Eph. i. 19. tual operations; as, We believe by this Pet. i. 5. power; we are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation. But if you alk, How the power of God comes to be exerted to fuch purpofes? I answer, It is from his special favour in Christ; and this is the way all comes to be ascribed to his grace or favour. This puts his arm to work, and opens those treasures, whence the faint is supplied and furnished for a godly conversation. The christian liveth by this special favour of God,

(1.) As this acteth in him. It's this which works those holy inclinations, and divine qualities, whereby the christian is inwardly 2Theff. i. renewed, and disposed to walk with God. This mortifies the flesh, and dethrones those lusts which had dominion in him, and would foon recover it but for his grace. This gives us necessary affistance for refist-

11, 12.

ing temptations to alter our course, and for Sermperforming those duties wherein our walk XIII.
consisteth. All the christian's graces are
derived hence, and by this excited and
maintained. When he is hard put to, the
grace of God is sufficient for him, and his 2 Cor. xii.
strength made perfect in weakness. Is the 9christian strong? it's in this grace that is
in Christ.

HAD God never visited us with his favour, this faint had continued dead in his fins, and without strength. Did his favour cease to act, he would soon faint, be overcome, and again wallow in the mire. It's 2 Pet. ii. this grace by which he stands; this, by its 20. blessing, succeeds all means of perseverance.

(2.) He liveth by this special favour of

God, as it acteth for him.

This chaineth the tempter, who else would soon deceive and overwhelm us. This grace moderates our trials, shortens our exercises, proportions our burdens, suits our conditions and circumstances, as may be fafest and most helpful to our souls. This provides the means of grace; this Rom. viii. finds seasonable helpers for counsel and 28. encouragement, and dispenseth afflictions and mercies, as our frame makes awakening warnings or encouragements most proper for our edification.

(3.) HE lives by this grace, as it is af-

feetingly manifested to him.

SERM. God is pleased to shed his love abroad XIII. in the heart, to a believer's feeling. This fiveetens the bitterest steps. The confola-Rom. v. 5. tions of Christ abounding, support the soul 2 Cor. i. 5, under perfecutions. When he grows remiss, a sense of what kindness God has expressed towards him, does awaken him to avoid what is offensive and dishonourable to the bleffed God, and conftrains him to

be active and faithful.

HE cannot behold what wonders basic been produced by the favour of God, without a blush, that he makes no better returns. Has my God bestow'd his Son, and has Christ died for me when I was an enemy? Has he, by his Spirit, raifed me from a dead state, and found me out when I was running farther from him? Has he pardon'd fuch a world of fins? Has he united me to the Lord Jesus, and adopted me among his fons, &c. and can I forfake him? God forbid. I am ashamed that my zeal is fo cold, and that I cannot walk more worthy of him. A believing prospect of the great things which grace has provided for him hereafter, does enlarge his heart, and establish his goings. These are things too glorious for the eye to behold, too great for tongue to utter, or the vastest I John iii. imagination to conceive: We know not what we shall be; that we shall be like Christ, and see him as he is, contains all we can defire, or are capable of. Some glimpses and

and foretaftes of these things repair the SERM. christian's strength, and invigorates his re- XIII. folutions. He answers temptations with this thought; The flesh can offer no such benefits as these which I hope for ; no, nor as those which I already enjoy: the light of God's countenance, the communion I have with Christ, surpass all this world can give: How then can I depart from this blessed One, when I have tasted he is thus 1 Pet. ii. 3. gracious; and also when he is so good as to pardon my many infirmities, accept fuch imperfect fervice, and grant a free access to his throne of grace, for grace and mercy Heb. iv. to belp in every time of need? Surely these 16. must incline and encourage me to follow his steps, and perfift in his ways.

2. THE christian conversation is by inberent grace, flowing from that special love

of God.

THE christian's conversation is not by sleshly wisdom, but it is in sincerity, by that grace which is subjectively in the true believer.

great part of the christian's conversation, especially Godwards. The prevalency of a spiritual life, to the exclusion of the dominion of the sless, is what denominates a sincere person: he is not in the fless, which every unconverted person is. The truth Rom. vii. and reality of regeneration (whence this 5-life begins) is instanced in the true fear of God,

SERM. God, in a fincere faith in Christ, and a XIII. prevalent love to God. These graces in truth, are not only necessary to our behaving well to men, but as it regards the frame and bent of the heart; the internal exercise of these are a part of the divine life and conversation.

It's not a conversation which leaves out the pulse, the bent, the cravings and motions of the heart Godward; for it is with him we have most to transact and do. Every act of grace towards God, makes up our living to him; yea, the habitual disposition is what he looks at, as much as at

Prov. xxiii. our exercise: My son, give me thy heart.

(2.) A HEART renewed by grace, depends on Christ for all supplies necessary to a christian conversation.

WHERE grace is implanted, the foul

is sensible of its own insufficiency to make any progress in God's ways. Whatever considence the hypocrite has in his own 2 Cor. iii. stock, the real christians own, Not that we are sufficient, as of ourselves, to think a good thought, much less to resist strong temptations, bear heavy sufferings, or perform spiritual duties in a right manner. He heartily assents to what Christ declares, John xv. Without me you can do nothing. Therefore as he is solicitous to acquit himself a true disciple of Christ, so his eye is directed to

him, to instruct and enable him to do fo.

He depends on him, and feeks to him for continual

continual affistances and supports. He con-SERM. cludes he shall manage his ways aright in XIII. proportion to what supplies are communicated; He can do all things through Christ Phil. iv. who strengtheneth him.

(3.) By the exercise of inherent grace, the external conversation of a christian is managed and maintained in sincerity.

As outward duties are dead and empty things, wherein no grace is in act, so a godly conversation were impracticable, were not all graces in exercise. The influences of the Spirit, in order to practice, are immediately on the heart, for the exciting and strengthning the graces he had there produced; and those excited and strengthned, do enable to godly and upright actings. Faith represents God's majesty and authority to the mind, which begets that reverence for his commands, as renders us obedient against all the threatnings of men, and the reluctancy of our hearts.

Faith realizeth an invisible world, whereby we are animated to endure all sufferings which attend our profession, awakened to avoid what leads to hell, and fixed in the way which, by divine ordination, brings us 2 Cor. iv. to glory. By faith we rely on Christ, and 18. derive virtue from him, whereby we are enabled to forsake what he came to destroy, and perform his demands, expressive of our fidelity to him, and obedience to the Father.

Love.

SERM. Love, in exercise, enlargeth our hearts in XIII. defigns for the glory of God, and in fear of offending him; this makes his yoke easy, and all his commands defirable, and not grievous. By humility we stoop to the meanest duties, by patience we are kept from repining at what we endure in our christian course, and by fortitude the difficulties and dangers attending us are maftered.

> THE bope of glory guards us against affaults, and so fills us with a contempt of this world, that its offers cannot entice us to turn out of our way. Godly fear checks our vanity, inconfiderateness, and security, that they betray us not to fenfuality and floth: And by repentance we recover from our falls, and are made more cautious of offending. None of the graces of the Spirit are useless, all of them are active and influential to render our conversation fincere and persevering.

4. A HEART principled with the graces of the Spirit, takes its greatest satisfaction

in God, as the most agreeable good.

Pf. lxiii. 3.

His loving-kindness is better than life, in the esteem of every gracious soul. He blesfeth himself in what he enjoys of God, and pants for more. A man thus disposed, must be careful so to order his ways, as to keep in his love, and be afraid of all fin, lest he forfeit the favour of God, or intermit the discoveries of it.

A CHRISTIAN finds that usually he SERM. enjoys more or less of God, as his con- XIII. versation is managed: when this is ordered or aright, God sheweth him his salvation. He Pf. 1. 23. communicates of it what we need or can bear at present, and grants such discoveries of what is referved, as fills the foul with joy. A man admiring and affected with these delights, is not only afraid to lose them by fin, but feels himself constrained to appear for God with zeal, and abound in the fruits of holiness. But, on the other hand, he finds when he finneth presumptu- Pf lvii. 8. oufly, his bones are broken, joy removed, the face of God is bid, the vifits of the Spirit more rare, and his operations more faint, whereby his foul becomes weakned as to grace, and almost overwhelmed as to comfort.

THE experiences of these things contribute greatly to a faithful walk. They cannot do otherwise with a gracious person; for nothing can please him, whilst he suspects his interest in God who is his portion; and this not only by a wise choice, but as the bent and inclination of his heart is fixed on God; for in him it finds true rest as in its centre; in him it glorieth, whatever it can want or suffer. And from a well-pleasing sense of God's love, it must act with vigor and caution too.

3. THE christian's conversation is in fincerity by the gospel, which is the word

SERM. of God's grace: it's fo called, Acts xiv. 3.

XIII. and justly, for it's a wonderful gift and

effect of divine favour; yea, it's term'd the

Tit. ii. 11. grace of God. The gospel contributes many ways to our having our conversation in

fimplicity and godly fincerity.

(1.) As the gospel contains the rule of this conversation. Our Lord Jesus hath taken into the christian dispensation all the laws by which his fincere followers are to fashion their hearts and lives. The godly man conforms himself to these: he rests not with any attainments as graces, except they be what the gospel describes to be such graces; what comes short of, or exceeds its definitions, he rejects as counterfeits. He avoids nothing as fin, but what the word forbids; nor accounts that a duty, which it does not fome way or other enjoin. But he is as concerned to keep both to their full extent, that so no part of duty may be refused, nor fin of any kind, or in any degree, allowed.

HE rejects all false rules and enthusialtick opinions, however plausible, and admits not that as part of the law of nature, which contradicts the gospel rule; by this he tries all prudent maxims, however celebrated; the counsel and customs of men, whatever reputation they have; and the laws of the church, and of magistrates, whatever be their sanction. By examining all by this rule, and yielding a sincere obe-

dience

dience to it, he avoids what contradicts, SERM. and performs what's requifite to a converfation in fimplicity and godly fincerity.

(2.) As the gospel includes the proper

motives to a fincere conversation.

THE christian needs arguments to perfuade him to embrace and abide in a course that is contrary to the flesh, and that expofes him to labour and fufferings. He finds in the gospel such arguments as are suited to this purpose, and by them he is often made willing to cross the flesh; and stirred up to persevering endeavours after eminent holiness, as what is justifiable and beneficial. The motives are not carnal or impure, but chiefly spiritual and divine, whereby they are agreeable to a renewed nature, and apt to promote boly resolutions.

HERE you find arguments from God's nature, perfections, providence, and authority; from Christ's love, sufferings, and interceffion; from his defigns, affiftances, and his final judgment. By the gospel, life and 2 Tim. i. immortality are brought to light. All this 10. display'd glory strongly excites; all the promised bleffings for time and eternity, are fo many topicks, whence inforcing motives are deduced. The christian knowing the inviolable connexion between a godly conversation and these bleffings, feels a power in these as motives to lead to that conversation; neither are gospel-threaten-

ings unapt to this end.

(3.) As

Matt. xi.

29.

(3.) As the gospel discovers things help-SERM. XIII. ful to this conversation, and what are im-

pediments to it.

HERE we are directed how to pray, hear, approach the Lord's table, meditate, examine ourselves, and offer thanks to God: all which are means which the christian improves for quickning and establishment in his walk. We have the experiences and behaviour of faints recorded, that we may follow their steps. The perfect example of our Lord Jesus is set before us, for the fashioning of our hearts, and the ordering Phil. ii. 5. of our lives. Let the same mind be in you which was in Christ: Looking to Jesus, who, for the joy that was fet before him, en-

dured the cross, despised the shame. Learn of me, for I am meek. The christian armour is fully described, Ephes. vi. 11. Many other helps might be mentioned, which upright fouls are acquainted with, and have

used successfully.

THE impediments of a fincere converfation, are to be feen in the recover'd falls of faints, the apostasy of professors, and in scripture-warnings and cautions. By these we are taught to beware of felf-confidence, trifling, idleness, neglect of duty, rashness, letting down our watch, not avoiding occasions of sin, loving the world, fear of man, difregarding the first degrees of backflidings, evil company, and hypocrify of heart. The account you also have of sa-

tan's

tan's violent and wily methods, is a great SERM. help to prevent his polluting our conver-XIII. fation.

(4.) As the Spirit of Christ communicates

his gracious influences by the gospel.

WE should soon be entangled, faint, and turn afide to crooked paths, if left to our own abilities. The gospel-discoveries and directions, are of themselves insufficient to cleanse and establish our hearts and ways; but the efficacy of the gospel to these holy ends, is by the Spirit's concurrence; and its glory is, that the bleffed Spirit, as the Spirit of Christ, communicates life, light, and power thereby; it's the ministration of this 2 Cor. iii. Spirit; by this it becomes the power of God 8. Rom. i. unto salvation. The upright often feels a 16. furprifing energy in the word, which has made him strong to refist temptations, when probable to overcome him; and supported him under fuch fuffering as he thought he could never endure. It is to the Holy Spirit working by the truth of the gospel, fuch things must be ascribed; he conveyeth light by gospel-discoveries; he makes the precepts mighty in the conscience; the promises and motives of the gospel take hold on the foul, infinuate into it, and inspire it with fixed resolutions, and virtue to . pursue them. The Spirit excites and improves those gracious dispositions by the word, which are most suitable to our present duty; he brings seasonable truths to VOL. II.

Gal. v.

16, 18.

SERM. remembrance, pleads them, darteth light XIII. upon them, holds them as close and long to the eye of the mind, as is necessary to them.

shew us our present work, and carry us through all the difficulties of it. Being thus led by the Spirit in the word, and

walking in him by obedience to his conduct, we come to have our conversation in godly fincerity, and fulfil not the lusts of the flesh.

THUS I have explained how the chriftian conversation is led by the grace of God, viz. by his special favour, by inherent grace, and by the gospel of grace, not by one without the other; for without the special favour of God, inherent grace and the gospel were insufficient, nay, we had not enjoy'd either; did not inherent grace concur, this conversation were not our walk, nor be made up of our actings. And if it were not by the gospel, we had wanted a certain rule for our duty and hope, which is necessary to subjects of moral government, and been enthusiasts, or treated as mere But that the best man's actings by this rule may not detract from the glory of divine grace, we fee that all the influence of the gospel upon our graces, and the efficacy of those graces to our walking fincerely, depend on the operations of the Spirit, as well as they are the bleffings merited by Christ, which are obtained by fuch a conversation.

## SECT. II.

2d Obs. The way whereby a christian SERM. conversation becomes evident to oneself, is XIII.

by the testimony of his conscience.

THE mind, upon serious reslections, and impartially comparing our actings with the rule, passeth sentence; which sentence is what's call'd its testimony, as it refers to any unjust challenge. The real christian approveth himself to God, as the supreme judge; He that judgeth me is the cor. iv. Lord. He appeals to men, as far as his 4 outward actings can manifest his integrity; and he appeals to his own conscience, and is approved by it, as far as he knows his own heart; and this he pleads against his own groundless suspicions, and the unjust censures of others.

FOR explication of this, consider,

I. THE just testimony of the conscience is necessary to a right hope concerning the state of a christian.

THE testimony is just, when 'tis according to the gospel, as a rule of judgment; i.e. when upon enquiry that's found in us, and done by us, to which the gospel promiseth salvation; and we are acquitted of that against which it pronounceth eternal death. The gospel way of comfort is to clear your interest in its privileges, by the conscience witnessing to your faith and obedience.

SERM. dience. None have a fatisfying reason of XIII. their hope, but such as have a good conscience as to their conversation in Christ.

1 Pet. iii. Our hearts must not condemn us, or we I John iii. can have no considence towards God.

Rom. iii.

2. THE joint-witness of the Spirit with the conscience, gives a satisfying comforting power to the testimony of the conscience: The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the sons of God. This privilege here witneffed, suppofeth a witnefling to all that, without which this must be inevident. the Spirit jointly witnesseth to the truth of the gospel, as to Christ's satisfaction, and to those promises founded thereon which relax the conditions of adoption. He witneffeth to our performing of those conditions, by his working them in us, which is his fealing us to the day of redemption. This shall not disappoint; but yet it is not properly that joint-witneffing with the conscience to the in-being of the terms of adoption; for the conscience does not witness thereto in such doubting faints as prevailingly suspect it. But the Spirit jointly witnesseth with our spirit, when both issue in this refult; "you have the gospel infal-" lible marks of the fons of God."

Eph. iv. 30.

SATAN's fuggestions, a consciousness of the deceit of our hearts, fear of what powers of corruption may be hid; a sense of what restraints, or mere common grace

may

may effect, what apostates have attained SERM. and done, &c. are sufficient to weaken the XIII. testimony of conscience when single, and obstruct our comfortable hope; therefore the witness of the Spirit is necessary to be joined with our spirits to prevent our doubtings, quiet our minds, and assure us of his saving work upon us. It is by his light shining on our graces, that our consciences Rom. ix. bear witness thereto in the Holy Ghost. And his manifestations and power joined to this testimony of conscience, do produce a satisfaction in our souls, that we have the signs, and consequently to us belong the privileges of the sons of God.

3. THE matter attested by the conscience is not legal persection, but fince-

rity of grace and obedience.

It would bear false witness, if it testified that we are innocent or perfect; for, If we say, we have no sin, we deceive our-1 Johni.8. selves, and the truth is not in us. A conversation by the grace of God in simplicity and godly sincerity, is the height of what Paul pretends to, who elsewhere declares concerning himself, Not as though I Cor.xiii. had already attained, or were already perfect. No, this is not the state or season when that which is perfect is come, but the conscience witnesseth to sincerity, to an heart really bent for God, though not so firmly as the christian would find it. It truly believes, tho' he is forced to cry, Lord,

belp

SERM. help my unbelief. It's irreconcilable to fin, XIII. tho' he often complains of its violent motions and out-breakings; it really likes and approves of perfection, and reckons that to be a beaven indeed, where he hopes to obtain it, tho', to his forrow, he finds much imperfection in all his graces, and all his You may eafily then collect, that this fincerity principally confisteth in the reality and truth in what graces we pretend, and the very beart being engaged in what good we perform; and therefore it expresseth itself more in fervent defire, than attainments; more in faithful endeavours, than performances; and often more in the agreeableness of spiritual blessings, than in a joyful affurance that they belong to us.

3d Obs. The just testimony of conscience to a christian sincerity, is his rejoicing in

the approaches of death.

This is our rejoicing: καίχησις notes joyful glorying. I shall, I. Explain in what sense 'tis a christian's rejoicing. 2. Evidence that this is a sufficient ground of rejoicing in the greatest danger, and nearest views of death.

Quest. In what sense is the testimony of conscience to a christian's sincerity, his re-

joicing?

Answ. 1. Negatively. Not that fincerity is any atonement for fin, or any merit of gospel-blessedness, or any way to be set in the room of Christ,

THERE

THERE are too many faults in the best SERM. men, to admit their justification by the law XIII. of innocency; and having once finned, all just pretence of merit is excluded. The work of fatisfaction for fin, and of metiting impretation of bleffings, are proper to Christ: This he has discharg'd alone, according to his Father's appointment, and that's supposed in all gospel-offers; for had not he procured peace, pardon, adoption, and glory, he would not invite us to him for obtaining them, nor by them in-The exactest con- Heb. x. force his call to finners. versation would be abominable to God, and 12, 14: useless to the most excellent persons, if 27. pleaded in rivalship with Christ. A real Mat. xxii. convert knows both Christ and himself 2. too well, to glory over Christ, to whom he ascribes his entire redemption, humbly acknowledging his best duties cannot atone for their own crimes, and when he has done all, he is an unprofitable servant. As Luke xvii. to expiation and purchase, all our rejoicing 10. is in Christ Jesus, who is also our intercesfor, and author of all our graces and abilities, as well as privileges.

2d Answ. Affirmatively. The christian rejoiceth in the evidence of sincerity, as this answers to the gospel-promises of that blessedness which Christ hath merited. These he knows describes the persons to whom the promised salvation belongs, and discriminates them from all such who shall

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not

36.

SERM. not obtain it. And he brought them to his XIII. bouse, and rejoiced, believing in God. This jailor, under convictions, had asked our apostle, What shall I do to be saved? Paul answereth, Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved. The jailor sincerely believed; that put him into a state of salvation, tho' he had not known it: But he had the testimony of his conscience, that he did believe in fincerity before he could rejoice. As the promise gave him no ground of joy in this falvation, as belonging to him, unless he truly believed in Christ; so whilst his faith was not evident to himself, his interest in that salvation was not evident to him, and confequently he could not rejoice, but continue trembling. But his interest in Christ and salvation being cleared, by his conscience witnessing that he believed in Christ in fincerity, he rejoiced; he rejoiced in Christ, and he rejoiced in his fincere faith too; he was glad of a Saviour, and falvation by him; he was glad he was a fincere believer, because such believers only could obtain falvation by Christ; and all insincere believers or hypocrites were excluded. It was faith unfeigned, it was faith which worketh by love, that Paul called him to; it was such a faith he rejoiced in; and it's observable, that it's said, he washed their wounds, brought them to his bouse, and set meat before them; and then it is added, be rejoiced. THERE'S

THERE'S no inconfistency between re- SERM. joicing in Christ, and rejoicing in the fin- XIII. cerity of our graces and actions; otherwise the apostle in my text greatly offended. I add further, no man can, upon gospelgrounds, rejoice in one, unless he rejoice in the other too. How can we rejoice in our fincerity, if we rejoice not in Christ as our Saviour, who expiated our fins, made reconciliation between God and us, purchafed our falvation, works all in all by his Spirit, justifieth us by his blood, and makes us and our graces accepted? Can we joy in our fincerity, and not in Christ, when our greatest fincerity can do none of those things; and if Christ had not performed them, we had been eternally miserable, notwithstanding our fincerest works or graces? On the other hand, How can we rejoice in Christ, if we rejoice not in our fincerity? For are not all hypocrites fure to perish, notwithstanding the all-sufficiency of Christ, and that because they are hypocrites? Christ's righteousness will not Mat. xxiii, fave him, whose faith is dead. Must we 14. not rejoice that we are not hypocrites, un- Jam. ii. believers, and apostates? yet this we cannot do, without rejoicing in our fincerity, whereby we are not fuch. Moreover, Christ is not ours, nor his faving benefits ours, without fincerity; for these are promised to fincere believers, and to none else. We must therefore despise these blessings,

SERM. or doubt God's promise, otherwise we must XIII. rejoice in our fincerity, which distinguisheth us from such as the promises belong not to. Finally, can we love Christ, and not rejoice in our sincerity, as his gift and resemblance? though our joy in the sincerity of our graces and ways, is not so much for its intrinsick goodness, as for the place Christ has assigned to it in the gospel confitution.

Secondly, I SHALL evidence that this is a sufficient ground of rejoicing in the greatest dangers, and nearest views of

death.

i. Nothing can justly prevent the joy of a fincere christian. All just doubts must be from a suspicion of our integrity; when this matter is cleared, we disbelieve the very scope of the gospel revelation, if we rejoice not in the certainty of final happer of the Lord will give grace and

glory, and no good thing will be with-hold from them that walk uprightly.

IF you object the imperfections of your

graces, though true, I answer,

First, HAPPINESS is, by the gospel, expressly promised to the sincerity of our graces, and not to the legal perfection of them. Grace, i. e. the special favour of God, including true felicity, even the christian's perfected happiness is so called, 1 Pet. i. 13. Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you, at the revelation of fesus

Eph. vi.

fesus Christ. Upon whom does the Spirit Serm. pronounce this grace? He tells you, on all XIII. them that love the Lord fesus in sincerity; not in sull perfection. The like is intended in the promises made to other graces; as, he that believes hath everlast-iTim.is. ing life: Is this perfected faith? No; the Spirit calls it faith unseigned. There is a hearty reality in those graces and works, and so they are above what is a dead image, or a counterfeit of what's commanded: But yet they come short of that perfection

which the precept injoins.

Secondly, It's not unbecoming Christ to promise happiness to the fincere christian, though imperfect. When God dealt immediately with perfect man by a law fuited to his condition, it was fit that the promised reward should be to perfect obedience, as the condition; for remunerative justice had so adjusted the duty and reward, that the last was to be of debt, and Rom. iv. to deprive him of life whilft obedient, had 4. been incongruous. Moreover, the promifed benefit was to be procured by his own obedience, and not purchased by another for him. But under the gospel God deals with us by a mediator, who has answer'd the demands of effential justice so fully, that if finners were delivered without a change, it would not be impeached. This mediator has all faving bleffings in his hand, as purchased by himself, and power to dispense them.

SERM, them. If he made an offer of them to XIII. all finners, he must make all partakers of them; or fix some conditions in his offers, especially if he will judge men by the offer he makes. If he appoint conditions, they will be fuch as become him to ordain, both with respect to himself, and with respect to the finner: and therefore they will be really good, and of a kind improveable to that perfection he defigned them hereafter; otherwife he would not appear holy, nor pursue the end of his coming, which was to restore God's image and government, as well as to obtain man's impunity. They must give some meetness to receive and relish his bleffings, else these would be despifed to his dishonour, and man's damage, who could not feel a happiness in them, nor incentives to the love and fervice of this bleffed Redeemer. Sincerity of grace agrees to all these, and whatever is short of it, would palpably fail to do fo. But further, the conditions would not be what exceeded the power he found, or gave to men, at the time he defigned to invest them in the respective bleffings; for that must render the offer vain to all, to the impeachment of his wisdom and integrity. Nor is it likely they should be so perfect, as to exceed his defign in appointing them, which is not to expiate or merit, nor fet men above a constant humble dependance on himself, for the pardon of their defects, and

and to render them acceptable on this fide SERM. that perfection of heaven, for which he is XIII. but preparing them in this life.

Thirdly, WE find the imperfection of their graces is still supposed in those whom the promises entitle to, and invest in, its

faving bleffings.

BESIDES the recorded weaknesses and faults of the most eminent saints, whom God owned for his reconciled fervants, and who were assured of falvation, as Abraham, Peter, &c. we find other reasons which demonstrate, that fincerity was accepted, and imperfection supposed to be confistent with it. I shall note only a few: All God's adopted, justified people, 2 Pet. iii. are commanded to grow in grace; they 18. are declared to have true grace, and a call to add to growth connotes it; but there would be no need nor room to grow in holiness, if the graces included in fanctification were perfect. Again; the most improved faints on earth, are to pray for forgiveness of sin; this our Redeemer appoints in the Lord's prayer. Furthermore, all the approved sons of God meet with chastisements at God's hand, to make them partakers of Heb. xii, his holiness, and of the fruit of righteousness. 10, 11. Not to mention the apostle John's three I John ii: ranks of real converts, little children, young men, and fathers; nor Paul's babes in Christ, and the more perfect, yet both united to him.

Gal. iii.

13.

SERM. IF we put these together, they will evi-XIII. dence, that fuch as God approved for real faints, and truly gracious, attained to no higher than fincerity; and tho' their graces and actings were not perfect, they were really heirs of the promises, and invested in faving bleffings as fincere persons, notwithstanding imperfection. Yea, many of them the Holy Spirit celebrates as eminent for their faith, love, fear of him, &c. and yet not perfect in any of these graces.

I AM larger in answering this objection, because it's the most common challenge to a christian's joy; and this being removed, the

rest will admit a briefer solution.

WHAT can hinder the rejoicing of that man, who knows he is fincere? You may rejoice, notwithstanding the exactness of the law, for you are redeemed from the curse of it: nor will this be the law by which you shall be judged. The justice of God can be no terror to you, for that is fatisfied; yea, through Christ, it is on your side; for it is written, That he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in fesus. Past sins, however great and many, must not affright you, for they Rev. i. 5. are washed away by the blood of Christ, they shall not be imputed. Grieve for fin as the worst evil, but your sealed pardon is ground

of joy, when the crime is most hateful and

bemoaned.

Remains

Remains of corruption are burdensome, SERM. yet being confistent with integrity, they XIII. ought not to prevent your thankfully rejoicing; for you are near a release, and they shall not condemn you. Neither is there any reason that the devil should molest your comforts, for you have conquered him in the war, by abiding faithful to the end; and shortly he who baffled you in many skirmishes, shall be trodden under your feet. Rom. xvi Death is the last enemy, but where covenant-fincerity is evident, you may not only rejoice, but you may glory over it; for pardon has removed its fting, and it's become friendly, notwithstanding your natural aversion to it. Look beyond it, whence its greatest terrors came, and you'll find it leads you to regions of light and joy, fo that you may, with the apostle, triumph over it; O death, Where is thy sting? 1 Cor. xv. O grave, Where is thy victory? Thanks be 55, 57. to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Is there cause for fear or fadness, that this vile body, which is the chief feat of fin, is fown to rife a spiritual glorious body; and, in the mean time, your Jesus, the Lord of the other world, will receive your spirits, freed from all defilement, and lodge them among the spirits of just men made perfect.

THUS you find that the joy which fincerity affords, is not to be prevented by imperfection of graces, the law of works,

SERM. the justice of God, past fins, remains of XIII. corruption, nor the terrors of death. But if I have not enumerated all, you'll find the apostle leaves out no hindrance of your

Rom. viii. joy unremoved: Neither death, nor life, 33—39 nor angels, nor powers, things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

2. This testimony witnesseth to our interest in all those things which minister

the truest joy to a rectify'd foul.

A REVIEW of a christian conversation. is a pleasure, not only as it prevents horror and danger, and is in itself delightful, as well as useful to others; but the principal comfort of it is, that it affords a prospect of all that's necessary to our final consummate happiness: For it assures us of our union with Christ, who is Lord of the unfeen world, and that he is to be our judge. We behold all his merits pleading for us, and all those incomprehensible things which he prayed for in John xvii. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26. belong to us, and shall be in us fulfilled. We shall be fully fanctify'd, made one in the Father and Son, as the Father is in the Son; possess that glory which Christ received, be with Christ to behold his glory; and that love be in us, wherewith he was loved of the Father. Faith in an unseen Jesus, now yields a joy unspeakable, and full of glory, by receiving

1 Pet. i. 8, 9. well it may, when we read that prayer of XIII.

our Lord foretelling our happiness.

NEED I subjoin, that assurance is given us, that Christ will receive our spirits, to present them as glorious and unspotted as is Eph. v. beseeming his spouse, and the members of his 27. body. Our fouls shall be perfected in light and love, and our bodies made like his glorious body, which shined with such a lustre in his transfiguration. This is a testimony, that our names are written in the book of life, that the unfading crown of glory shall eternally rest on our heads, and we shall be admitted to drink of those Psal. xvi. rivers of pleasures which are at God's right-11. hand. Who can forbear rejoicing in dying pangs and pains, when he beholds himfelf so near a full deliverance from all that grieved him, and the full and endless enjoyment of all his defires; yea, his enlarged faculties being filled with all that's agreeable to a mind divinely refined?

3. THE interest of every sincere christian in all this, is abundantly secured, and

infallibly fure.

THE least uncertainty about things so dear to us, would shake our comfort, and diminish our joy. The concern is of such moment, that our minds can't be at full rest, unless our joy be sustained by uncommon supports, especially when just going into eternity. Our gracious Father considered Vol. II.

XIII. might have strong consolation, and firm and stedfast ground for our hope; therefore, belief. ii. sides his word, in which it is impossible for him to lie, he consirmed it with an oath; yea, he shews us within the veil, the Jesus our forerunner entered for us, i. e. as our head, to take possession, and prepare a John xiv. place for us, and be the first fruits and pledge of our entring into that glorious state. What a foundation of triumph is

this!

HE has also added feals to his covenant for greater confirmation, and given us his Son for a furety of it, even that Son who so loved us, as to die in our stead, and has a concern of great glory in our falvation. Besides the affurance given us by the gospel covenant, he hath revealed fo much of his covenant of redemption with our Mediator, as to let us fee the certainty of our being justified by the knowledge (or faith) of Christ; and that his fufferings are imputed to us as our pleadable security. These things, with the shedding of his love in our hearts, and the experience we already have of his truth and love, strengthen our joy by the imposfibility of a disappointment.

4. HE will find that nothing without this will afford joy in a dying hour, or in eternity. When you behold your riches vain, your friends useless, and all the world emptiness itself, it will be a solid comfort,

Heb. vii.

Isa liii.

that

that you have bread to eat which the world SERM. knows not; you have what do support and XIII. refresh you, even lively hopes in a dying hour, and all above and within at peace, upon the evidence of fincerity; whereas your profession without fincerity, your greatest performances without fincerity, your gofpel-enjoyments and gifts without fincerity, must appear too infignificant and weak to bear up your fouls. What joy must it be, that God has made you upright! and that he approves your appeal to him; that the graces you had, tho' fmall, were yet fincere; and your walls was in integrity, tho' full of imperfections. Moreover, in eternity you'll fee, that not only profession, and hopes, but Christ himself, will be of no faving use to hypocrites. How then may your hearts rejoice, that the Spirit of Christ fashioned your hearts aright, that the fruits of the Spirit in you were all in truth; and so he prevented that Eph. v. g. hypocrify, by which the foolish virgins, and the man without the wedding-garment, do perish eternally.

Exhort. 1. BE all persuaded to take this course for your rejoicing under the sentence of death. See that conscience can give you this testimony, that your conversation has not been with slessly wisdom, but by the grace of God, in simplicity and godly sincerity. It's not long before death will certainly arrest you, now is the time of prepa-

Y 2

ring

SERM, ring for the reviews of conscience, and it XIII. will give fome testimony, whether you will or no. Self-love will awaken it to speak upon the approaches of eternity, unless by stupidness you carry the plainest mark of your damnation.

> IT will judge with another light, closeness, and power, than at present. the awful views of God's bar, of heaven and hell, when so near you, will try the testimony which conscience now giveth, at another rate than you can imagine in health. Many will find conscience blast their former peace, and to revoke its own flattering fentence which it gave when afleep by spiri-

tual floth, or bribed by luft.

IT will judge, then, not by mens opimion, but by the gospel rule. It will arraign not a few particular acts, but the Prov. xx. Scope of your lives. It will search your very inwards, the frame of your hearts; your prevailing ends in what good you performed, and not sentence only by external actions. It will take cognizance of your private works, and remember much that you now forget; yea, mark many things for faults, which you accounted innocent. It will baffle many of those excuses, which it now allows; and despise many things, by which you think your crimes extenuated.

On fuch accounts, you'll find need of utmost care in so ordering your conversation, as to find the testimony of your con-

sciences.

27.

sciences affording you ground of joy in a SERM. dying hour. But if it justly pass sentence XIII. against you, death will be a king of terrors. If it brand you as hypocrites, How John iii. much more will God condemn you, who is 20. greater than your conscience? greater in light and purity, to find matter of accusation; and greater in power, to fasten conviction on the mind, and to enflame it with the

fense of guilt and danger.

Exhort 2. Frequently examine your state in health, and do it also when you soon expect to die. If you often examine yourfelves in health, it will tend to your eternal fafety; for if you perceive your danger, you will be awakened to prevent it, by improving the proper seasons. Nor will it be a fmall help to your rejoicing in the testimony which conscience gives on a deathbed, that it is what has been often examined, and at leifure. Whereas it is a fign that man's condition is not good, who never tries it; for this declares him too flupid and careless about his falvation, to be a living faint. And if you begin this felftrial on a death-bed, you'll find a state so long neglected, can scarce yield good grounds for a comfortable fentence; and the conscience will be unfit to pass any just sentence, because unaccustomed, and unskilful in trying and judging of your condition.

Often, then, try your own felves; you will 2Cor. xiii. find on a fick-bed there was use and need of 5.

Y 3 doing SERM. doing it often. One time may rectify the XIII. mistakes of another, at least what past a frequent enquiry will be more confirmed. Neglect not to examine it over again on a death-bed; take the advantage of its awakeing views, and of the nearer approaches God usually makes to the soul, when half separated from the body. If a rejoicing testimony will bear the sight of God's bar at hand, your comfort will be established. If it should prove false, there's more hope in applying to Christ for your conversion on a sick-bed, (however suspicious it be) than after death.

Exhort. 3. BE careful that the testimony of your conscience be true and just.

It may be, yea, too often is, false. The hypocrite's ungrounded hopes are founded in a lying conscience; and the unjust sears of a sincere christian proceed from a mistaken conscience. The hypocrite is hereby secure in a bad state, which he neglects to alter in his day of grace; and thereby his eternal misery is more grievous, as he is disappointed, and also ashamed of his folly; because the grounds of his hopes were so easily discernable to be weak and salse, had he been true to himself.

THE doubting christian's mistakes shall not hazard his salvation, because its the sentence of Christ which is decisive; and that will be according to the truth of every man's case, and not the mistaken opinion of

men,

men. But yet his doubts abate his rejoice- SERM. ing, as long as they prevail. They often hinder his growth, by causing him to spend that time in useless complaints, which ought to be employed in growing in grace, whereby it would become more visible. He discourageth weak faints, and too often proves a stumbling-block to the wicked.

I CALL each of you to be folicitous that conscience give a right testimony, seeing error in this affair is so fatal. To help you in this, take these directions. Be solemn and impartial in your fearch; pray the Spirit to witness with your spirits, and strictly avoid whatever provokes him to with-hold his testimony. The hypocrite needs this for his effectual conviction; the believer needs it for his comfort. Again; be fure John xvi. the rule you try, be just and sufficient to decide your case, when sentence passeth. Nothing below the gospel is the true rule;

and therefore conclude, you must be free from all that against which the gospel pronounceth death; and what this promifeth life to, be and do in truth. That which is most obvious and sure to give in as evidence, is my text as before explained; for inward babits are not so plain; and without a fincere conversation, they are in vain pretended; nor can they be wanting where this

is maintained to the end. THE text, as I have explained it, will give you three cautions, which are useful

SERM. to prevent a false sentence in favour of hy-

XIII. pocrify.

I. SEE that what you do esteem to be godly acts, be performed by the grace of God.

2. THAT the scope of your whole conversation be directed with a sincere respect to God, and to his will, and not by fleshly wisdom.

3. THAT what faults you are chargeable with, be not inconfistent with godly fincerity. You are to mourn for, and faithfully endeavour to reform, all faults; but let those that seem, by their power and interest in your hearts, to be a challenge to sincerity, strike deep in your concern to mortify them, that you be not deceived.

Exhort. 4. WHAT just testimony your conscience gives, receive it, and be suitably affected. If it be true and plain against you, as a hypocrite, cast away your false hopes, apply to thyself the threatnings of the gospel, betake you to Christ for healing; lie, with humility, in the way of the Spirit, duly attending on the means of grace; and be much in prayer for his regenerating grace, longing to receive it, and ready to improve all that tends thereto.

But if the testimony be for you, be thankful to God, be enlarged in his ways, and account it your duty to rejoice. Maintain this joy against all challenges, by fresh applications to Christ; yea, quit it not, un-

less

less you prove such backsliders, as to have SERM. reason to question your integrity. This XIII. testimony, when just, is recorded above, and of that use, that no temptation should hinder your saying with him, I will not Job xxvii. remove my integrity from me; my righteous-5,6.

ness I hold fast, I will not let it go.

THE character in the text belonged as much, and was exemplified as plainly, in our worthy brother deceased, as in most. He well understood, that his joy in a dying hour must (in subordination to Christ) depend on the practice of it. That he might bind his soul the faster, and with more freedom derive strength from Christ to perform it, he solemnly subscribed a covenant with his God. For the stricter observing his conversation, he kept a diary, that by a review he might gain experience, and rectify mistakes: But this, I fear, is destroyed.

HE entred betimes into heaven's way, and held it to the last, not repenting his choice, tho' often bewailing his imperfections. How may this encourage young converts to persevere! What a crown of glory is it to the hoary head, to be thus found in the ways of righteousness. Your pastor was aged seventy-seven years, and, with old Policarp, declared, that tho' I have long ferved him, I have always found him a good master, and therefore I cannot forsake him. Undefiled religion was his business;

SERM. finess; to his utmost he promoted this in XIII. others; to express the power of it, he applied himself, both as a christian, and as a minister.

As a christian, his conversation was of apiece, regulated by the word of God, which he professed to set always before him; and this appear'd in his private behaviour, his walk in his house, and the discharge of relative duties: he refused not the burden he bound on others, and confirmed his doctrine by his practice. Fleshly wisdom was not his guide, but so far from tricking, that he was rather too blunt and plain.

NONE more importunate in pressing holy diligence, and few express'd a more humble dependance on the grace of Christ, which he knew how to make confiftent in his practice and doctrine too. His croffes, which were neither few nor small, he endured with submissive patience. He too much affected privacy; I fay, too much, because his publick usefulness was thereby lessen'd, as to some instances: For this he apologiz'd (when blam'd) by his unfitness to walk, with fome other reasons. Yet he made his advantage of it, by closer converses with his own heart, and better preparations for his publick labours. But what past between God and his own foul, he studiously concealed, from an humble modefty, or we had known more of what watered watered and warmed that root, which SERM. brought forth such affectionate, lively, and XIII. abundant fruit in his ministry, which could not be veiled.

This leads me to speak of him as a minister of the gospel. He was skilful in his work, being greatly sitted to divide the word aright, and to common ediscation. He was sound in the faith, except men will call him heterodox for avoiding extremes, or for more aptly expressing truths than men less accurate, or less honest, chuse to do; or for holding such positions as are necessary to make his preaching consistent with itself, and conducive to the ends of its institution. He managed his ministerial

work with christian fincerity.

IT was not after the flesh he preached; for tho' his learning was great, it was not with the wisdom of man's words that he difpensed the truth of the gospel, well knowing that fuch affectation was not likely to be attended with the divine bleffing; and that fuch words, in themselves, are unapt to edify the greater part of our auditors, if any. He preached as one believing what he faid, one fearing the awful account he was to give, and fenfible that the confequences of his ministrations were too great to be trifled about. The weapons of his warfare were not carnal, but spiritual; mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds. Scripture-revelation in fcripture,

SERM. scripture language, framed the substance XIII. of his discourses; though he neglected not to reason strongly on subjects determinable

by the light of nature.

Carnal advantages had no power over the dictates of his conscience. He chose to be ejected out of his parish, Alphage, without any prospect of a subsistence for his poor family, rather than conform against his light. Fidelity to his God made him prefer reproaches, contempt, poverty, and persecution, before honour and plenty, in a way he apprehended finful. The same temper discovered itself in his avoiding all carnal shifts to enrich himself, when a nonconformift. He neither courted nor flattered the rich, undermined not his brethren, preached not smooth things. He urged gospel precepts, when no preaching would please many, if it infifted on any duty. He preached privileges in a right season and fit manner, as motives to finners to close with Christ, but not as pillows to make them fecure, by neglecting to tell them, they belonged not to them whilft unconverted. He preached them as an encouragement to faints for obedience and growth; but he called them to clear their interest by scripture figns, and taught them the duties, which benefits were inducements to perform. He preached Christ in all his offices; and tho' he explained what Christ had suffer'd, yet he did not preach

as if Christ's expiatory work were unfinish'd, SERM. or that his dying would save sinners in their XIII. impenitency; or, as if Christ were still in his humble state, without a throne, whence he gave forth his commands; and without a kingdom, wherein he ruled by laws and power; and without a tribunal, before which all men, good and bad, must stand and be judged: No, he preached the gospel of the cross, and of the kingdom too.

HE preached as one knowing both God and man; as knowing God, and thence shunned not to declare his whole counsel; what he declares, and what he requires; conditional promises to grace, and the abfolute promises of grace. As knowing men, and therefore impressed their hope and fear in his calls to them, conformable to the ministry of Christ, and all his faithful mesfengers, who back'd the gofpel-call with promises and threatnings. One reason why this excellent person was a Boanarges, oft fetting before men God's threatnings, was, that where the gospel is historically believ'd, unregenerated men are apt to be fecure bypocrites; for they believe that Christ died for our fins, and God is ready to forgive them, and will forgive all who believe. These men being baptized, wearing the christian name, and taking an historical temporary faith for faving faith, they flatter themselves, that all the privileges of the gospel, and salvation, belong to them. This caused SERM. caused him to pluck men as brands out of XIII. the burning, and to persuade them, as knowing the terrors of the Lord; that their blood might not lie at his door, by not warning

them of their danger.

His fincerity, by the grace of God. made his labours abundant, breathing forth a zeal for God in each. He trained up several young men (among whom his worthy fon is one) for the ministry, most of whom shine as eminent lights in the church. His pains in catechifing were great; to which he urged ministers, for the propagating of knowledge, establishment in the truth, and preparing persons for saving advantage by the ministry. He printed many books for common benefit, and with great acceptance, as the many editions of that of the facrament manifest. Who preached more fermons, or with equal fervor, in the midst of weakness? Yea, pains must quite disable him, or they could not keep him out of the pulpit; a life prolong'd to unusefulness, was a burden he deprecated, as the greatest trial.

God favoured his zealous diligence and fincerity; he prevented his fear of out-living his usefulness; fifty-three years he served Christ in the gospel, yet he remained capable of service to his last week. The very sabbath before his death, he preached and catechised with great vigor. His zeal carried him to build the first meeting-house

in London, and thereby opened the way for SERM. many ministers, with more freedom, to en- XIII. ter upon greater service. This faithful servant of Christ, is the last of the London ministers ejected by that sad AEt of uniformity; few of whom had more feals to their ministry, tho' all of them were too useful to be filenc'd for uninstituted inventions, without fuch guilt as requires repentance, before England be fecure. His laborious life is come to an end, but then fignal kindness did not forsake him; he had often, among other things, defired that he might be able to fay at death, bis peace was made with God: his request was answered in that as well as in the rest; for being desir'd, when speechless, to signify his satisfaction, as to his eternal state, by lifting up his hand, he readily lifted up his hand: Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.

You, his people, have acquitted yourselves to your pastor with great affection and esteem, when the ministerial office is generally despised: You have kept stedsast in a giddy age, and lived in peace amidst too many broken churches; yet seriously remember, you have many helps to account for, and must persevere, unless you have begun in vain. It's ground of thankfulness that his recoveries were so frequent, and that God respited his precious life so long. Nevertheless, to be bereaved of him,

whilst

SERM. whilst he remained so useful, is a rebuke. XIII. and must be a cause of grief to you, who whave loft, in him, an experienced guide; one who was acquainted with the state of your fouls, able to refolve your doubts, and obviate your temptations. He is departed who was a father to many of you, and affectionately loved you as his children. You have lost one who prayed for you; his many prayers are on record for your welfare, which always lay near his heart. You will hear no more his importunate calls to awaken you when drowfy and remifs. You will fee him no more, till you meet him in the other world; to prepare you for which, his labours were fo abundant, and well fitted. To that world you are hastning after him; death is not far from any of you; look all to it, that he be not found a witnefs against any of you for your unprofitableness; which he must be, if you be found graceless bypocrites, notwithstanding a name to live. But how great will your mutual satisfaction prove in the great day, when you are found to be his rejoicing and his crown!

SUCH of you as were nearly related to him, as a father in the flesh, are highly obliged to honour his name by a christian walk. Remember his dedication of you, by performing your vow. Answer his care in your education, by a found judgment and holiness of life: be also solicitous that

the unfeigned religion which descended to SERM. you, be industriously propagated to your XIII. off-spring.

I HEARTILY pray, that we surviving ministers may have a supply of that Spirit, by which he with the other ejected ministers, were such common blessings, in their solid judgment, truly profitable labours, serious self-denying spirits, and a sincere conversation.

MAY all you his people, his relations, and we ministers, remember to follow him in faith and fincerity, considering the end of his conversation; fesus Christ, the same yesterday, to day, and for ever, tho' this, with other of his ministers, are fallen asleep.



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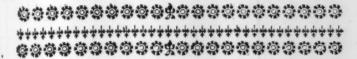
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A

## FUNERAL-SERMON,

Occasioned by the DEATH of

Mrs. Mary Gravener.

Preached November 30. 1707.

EZEKIEL XXIV. 16.

Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke; yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, &c.



E are met together upon an SERM.

occasion, which exemplifies XIV.

most of my text in fact;

and speaks aloud to all of

us, as well as to them who

most feel the sharpness of

this providence; the wife and bleffed God has executed, on a gospel-prophet, that sudden breach which he here denounceth between Ezekiel and his wife.

Z 2

SECT.

## SECT. I.

SERM. XIV. WE have in this verse,

I. A PREFACE, Son of man, behold.

II. THE providence whereby he is exercised; I take away the desire of thine eyes

with a stroke.

III. A CHARGE as to his behaviour under it; yet shalt thou neither mourn nor weep. Which, tho' peculiar to the prophet, as to its extent, yet prescribes to all of us moderation in the like trials.

I. A PREFACE, Son of man, behold: Where I shall consider, both, 1. Son of man; and, 2. The import of the word, behold. This son of man falls under 2 two-fold consideration.

1. Son of man, as a mere designation of the holy prophet Ezekiel; q. d. "Ezekiel, "my prophet, whom I have called by office to transact in my name with this people, towards thee I'll exert my soveriegaty; and tho' thou art faithful, yet,

" for my people's instruction, I'll take away thy wife with a stroke; that by

" this breach, and thy behaviour under

" it, they may be convinced, that I'll not fpare them in what they account most

" defirable; but my judgments shall make

fo

" hafte, and fill them with fuch amaze-

"ment, as shall prevent the outward to-SERM." kens of sorrow, yea, overwhelm them XIV. "in a confused stupefaction." You find it so applied and explained, ver. 21, 22, 23. Behold, I will profane my sanctuary, the excellency of your strength, the desire of your eyes, and that which your soul pityeth; and your sons and your daughters shall fall by the sword, and you shall not mourn or weep, but you shall pine away for your iniquities.

1st Observ. NEITHER sacred offices, nor real boliness, exempt men from the loss of those outward comforts which they

most esteem.

Here Ezekiel, a holy prophet, is bereaved of the desire of his eyes. Abraham
burieth Sarah, and Aaron beholds his sons Lev. x. 2.
removed by a surprizing stroke. David
cannot preserve his over-valued Absolom, nor
Job his children, tho' he offered sacrifices Job i. 5,
for them day by day. Calamities in this 19.
life are not peculiar to the wicked, nor are
saints exempted from proverty, reproach,
sickness, widowhood, or dying childless.
Their grace secures not riches, credit,
health, wise, or children; they hold greater
things by a more certain tenure, than they
can pretend to temporals: Yet these are
not removed without a reason. For,

Ist R. THE best may forfeit their com-

forts.

SERM. 1 Sam. iii. 13.

Eli, by finful indulgence, lost his fons: XIV. and God remark'd his folly by their death. to warn others from the like connivance at children's faults. What has God taken away, which was not abused before-hand as an occasion of fin, or not fruitfully us'd by due improvement? There are in the holiest ministers such remains of corruption, as may betray them into fuch forfeitures as God beholds, and their own conscience, in time, shall charge them with, tho' others do not perceive them. Who then must not grant, that they who are capable of forfeiting their choicest enjoyments, may well account them lofeable, and find them fo?

2d R. THE best may need the removal of their dearest comforts. When the case is fo, the better a man is, the more certain is the loss; for his interest in God's covenant assures him of what is necessary to bring him fafe to heaven. On this account Pfal. exix. David faith, In very faithfulness thou hast

75. afflicted me.

> This necessity becomes more manifest, when our enjoyments have proved a fnare to us. Even wife and children often prove thus, by alienating our affections from God, or abating our bountiful disposition to the poor, or rendring our minds distracted in God's worship, and apter to neglect it; or making us more covetous, or backward to leave this world, or less forward to expose

pose ourselves for the cause of Christ. SERM. Other bleffings become an occasion of fin XIV. to us; as riches, health, and honour, when we grow proud, vain, fecure, too much pleased with things sensible, and forgetful of death, and eternal things. When this is the fruit of our comforts, if depriving us of them be the aptest means (as commonly it is fo) of healing our diftempers, and recovering us to a better frame; the loss of them is a beneficial mercy, and their continuance would be a judgment.

THERE may be equal need that a comfort should be removed, tho' we shall not fully perceive it, perhaps before it's discovered by the light of another world. So it is when God prevents that evil which he forefaw would attend the continuance of what we defired, or prepares us by the loss of it, for some future eminent service, great fuffering, or fingular benefit. Herein God's infallible forefight provides against our wants, before we are fenfible of them.

3d R. THE relations of the holiest perfons are fading and mortal: All flesh is Ifa. xl. 6, grass, and withereth away as the flower 8. thereof. Departed relations were not only under the sentence of death, which would force them to die in time, but they have often in them the feeds of an early death. Heb. ix. When it's fo, their days cannot be pro- 27. long'd to old age without a miracle; and has the greatest saint a right to expect miracles.

Z 4

SERM. racles, or the faith which was proper to XIV. them? The promise is, that God will with-hold no good thing from him who walketh uprightly: But not that the same thing is alway good, or that it shall be alway continued, when it is transitory in its nature.

4th R. THE inhabitants of this world, however good, are liable to share in some calamities; by which God witnesseth against

the apostasy of mankind.

ALL are the race of fallen man, and as Job xiv. 1. fuch, are of few days, and full of trouble. The holy God has left some marks of dislike upon the very earth, the brute, and all mankind. Tho' believers are pardon'd as to destructive punishments, yet remains of sin, death, uncertain enjoyment of present good things, want of solid satisfaction therein, and many other afflictions, are some of the troubles they are as naturally Job v. 7. born to, as a spark flies upwards; and the

best not exempted whilst they are pilgrims. This stage of sin shall not be totally free from sorrow, nor that appear a beaven, before a conflagration, which join'd with bell in a rebellious revolt. The must assured saint, must be removed to heavenly places, before all tears shall be wiped away from his eyes.

Inf. 1. WE ought to censure none as wicked, because bereaved of the most desi-

rable common bleffings.

WHAT

What a graceless man may enjoy with SERM. God's hatred, another may lose, and yet XIV. abide in God's favour. Yea, that may be taken away from a good man in mercy, which is continued to another man in judgment. Job was rather tried than punished, and yet was stripp'd of all his estate, children, and health; nevertheless, his friends are blamed, as greatly censorious, for suspecting his integrity, because so remarkably Job xlii. distress'd; yea, though his anguish extorted 7-many indecent complaints.

man, are in such bright characters, that we Psal. Ixiv. consider not his doings wisely, if we read not 7, 9. that man's offence. But they rashly pretend to stand in God's cabinet, who, by outward calamities, judge of any man's state. Such Cynicks would be more cruel to poor Lazarus, than the dogs who licked his sores; and if they know any faults by themselves, I would have them consider, that the least sin is a surer sign, than the greatest

Inf. 2. The best men should so prepare for outward troubles, that the greatest may not surprize them. As you have spiritual enemies, that call you always to be armed, so you are obnoxious to many worldly troubles, any of which will be apt to sink you, if you provide not before hand to bear it. I exhort you not to anticipate afflictions for needless torment, but so to reckon on your

affliction, that any man is wicked.

common

SERM. common lot, as to be weaned from what XIV. you over-value, to be more entirely refigned to God's will, to live more by faith on Christ, and things above; to be better stock'd with faith, humility, self-denial, and patience, and with such gospel-considerations, as contribute to a fixed sedateness and serenity of mind. What the gospel-covenant does not preserve you from, it's christian prudence to be fitted to endure; and what it promiseth not to continue, a preparedness to quit it will make the loss more easy.

2d Obs. God's ministers often suffer for the peoples instruction: ver. 24. we readEzekiel is unto you a sign: He endured this fore loss for their warning. God has a sovereign right to use his creatures for his purposes, as far as is compensated by the being he gave them, and continues; (he is too good and just to exceed this, except as a judge against delinquents) in that Psal. cxix, sense all are his servants, for he is univer-

91. fal proprietor.

His peculiar people, by antecedent and promised benefits, are still more obliged to devote themselves to him; and should they murmur at his disposals, they bring the sincerity of their dedication under doubt, and express a contempt of the super-abundant blessings which they expect, or else would unjustly hope for them.

Ministers

Ministers are chosen by God in a special SERM. manner; and in accepting the office to XIV. which he calls them, they confent that he should serve himself of them, by warning and directing others as he appoints, and delivering his mind, whatever it may expose them to. And as they are to suffer persecution from men, for publishing his truth, fo, upon the same reason, they must consent to bear such afflictions by God's hand, as he knows will enforce his truth, and make them most effectual to those among whom they are employed. Moreover, what of that kind is inflicted on his ministers, is the likelier warning to many, because they are more noted as publick perfons; and the more convincing, both because they ought to be more innocent, and being consecrated to God in a special manner, what he lays on them, is a greater fignification of his purposes concerning those whom God appoints them to transact with and represent.

Exhort. 1. LET people learn to profit by the afflictive providences of God to-

wards their ministers.

THEIR sickness, their signal loss of relations, &c. are designed for your benefit, as well as their doctrine. Israel had prevented the severer strokes of God upon themselves, if they had received instruction by the calamity on Ezekiel, in this death of his wife. As God gave in St. Paul

a pattern

SERM. a pattern of bis long-suffering, to encou-XIV. rage all that should believe; fo he gives, in all his afflicted ministers, an example to awaken all that provoke him by their transgressions. Judgments often begin with his prophets, to inforce their ministry. May you be excited to reform by God's taking away your minister's wife with a stroke, left he remove what's most defirable in your eyes, and fmite you in what will be most afflictive. God, by trials and temptations,

> be more inclined to benefit by hearing. 2. But the term, son of man, besides a defignation of Ezekiel's person, may be intended as an expression to keep him humble under his eminent revelations. As no prophets had fo many and remarkable vifions as he, so no prophet is so oft spoken

> fitteth us to preach; fo by them you should

to under this title, fon of man.

Obs. 3. God is pleased to use fit methods to keep his privileged fervants humble.

Is Ezekiel favoured with more abundant visions than others? The wife God minds him of his low original, calling him, fon of man fo frequently; I think scarce a chapter without that appellation: q. d. "Tho' I am thus familiar with thee, be " not high-minded, for thou art not of " a sublimer nature, or better descent than " thy fellow-creatures, who are not fo en-

" trusted. Thou art made of earth, thou

" wer't born in fin, and must shortly die

« as

" as well as others. It's my condescen- SERM.

" fion, not thy merit, that thou art thus XIV.

" privileged. Thou art but that worm with angels; Job xxv. man, tho' thus conversant with angels; 6.

" therefore be not elated in thy opinion of

" thyself, nor unthankful for this undeser-

" ved privilege, nor despise thou others."

SHALL facob prevail in his wrestlings Gen.xxxii. with God! He must go lame by a touch 25, 26. that disjoints his thigh, lest he should ascribe it to his greater strength. And a thorn in 2 Cor. xii. the sless, the messenger of satan, is given to 7. buffet Paul, lest he should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of revelations.

Exh. IMPROVE all the methods God takes to keep you bumble, under your advantages. God confiders our frame, and therefore as he with-holds not fuch gifts and encouragements as are proportioned to our employs and difficulties, so he bides Job xxxiii. pride from man, and takes care to prevent 17. our being puffed up by our advantages. Peculiarly eminent favours, gifts, or fuccess, are very usual forerunners of some sharp exercises. God, who sees our inclinations to pride, takes such humbling ways to obviate our abuse of his talents. Nor should it be thought needless as to us, when God faw those ways meet to be taken with fuch eminent saints, as Jacob, Ezekiel, and Paul. In them we see that neither strong graces, nor the holiest offices, set men beyond

SERM. yound the usefulness of humbling cautions; XIV. therefore let not us esteem them useless, nor make them so, but quietly submit, and carefully answer God's end, by subduing all proud thoughts, keeping lowly and humble, under all our attainments, and suspicious of ourselves, lest these become a snare.

2. I Go on to the second part of the preface, behold; son of man, behold; i. e. attend and consider what I say, and what I perform; it deserves attention; for it's cer-Exek.xliv. tain, it's fit, tho' it's also strange: Mark

5. well, and lay it to heart:

I SHALL not further enlarge on this, than to mind you, that to difregard the word or works of God, is a contempt of his facred majesty; and to despise his chastisements, is the way to bring us under severer distresses, as well as to render those which we feel unprofitable. Moreover, we are especially to take notice of that in every providence, which most tends to excite our compliance with the defign and voice of God therein, viz. whatever in the providence is fittest to alarm, strikes deepest, and abides longest; as the surprising fuddenness of a relation's death, or the like; for by fuch things God puts an accent on his instructions, and a penetrating edge to his rebukes. Nevertheless, we may observe, that we are naturally fo unattentive, so apt to mistake, so backward to learn and comply, that God fees reason

Prov. iii

reason to cry to a holy prophet, under this SERM. most awakening providence, behold; son of XIV. man, behold. How much more cause have we to take heed, that we be not regardless and unattentive to God's warnings and dispensations. This leads me to the second general head.

II. THE providence whereby Ezekiel is exercised: I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke. It is, I. A dark dispensation. 2. A very awful dispensation.

I. A VERY dark dispensation till God unriddled it. The prophet might ask, as the people did, ver. 19. Wilt thou not tell us, what these things are to us, that thou doest so? "Such a breach on thy servant, " who is faithfully discharging his trust, " and doing thy work; fuch a wound " made in the most tender part, and yet " all marks of forrow forbidden. My wife " to be taken away by a plague, and I not " mourn!" It was a perplexing matter at first view, but God explains the whole, ver. 21-27. and then it was very confiftent, and eafily accounted for. prophetick emblem to enforce that message; for the success of which, Ezekiel was, by office, to do and bear the utmost; and who, from his love to Ifrael, was willing to have them reclaimed, tho' by a method so afflictive to himself.

Observ.

SERM. Observ. 4. The darkest dispensation in XIV. due time will appear to be wise and just, yea, and gracious towards all who are upright

right.

about our God, yet still righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. This saints believe, when God's dealings are most obscure, and they least able to solve their difficulties. The providences of God were such, as feremiah thought he might plead with God about their irreconcileableness with, and seeming contradiction to, his justice; yet before he will begin his plea, he fixeth on this conclusion,

Jer. xii. 1. Righteous art thou, O Lord.

OFTEN, in this world, good men come to perceive, that what for fome time staggered them, was very amiable, and best contrived for happy fruits; and they have blessed God for that as a great mercy, which they long complained of as the forest judg-

Gen. xlii. ment. Poor facob lived to see that his foseph, whom he lamented as dead, was only sent to keep his whole family alive; and those all things which were against him, were but preparatory to the embraces of that best-beloved son. David was so consounded at the wicked's prosperity, when himself

Pf. lxxiii. was plagued and chastened every morning, 1,13,22. that he almost judg'd religion and innocence made his case rather worse than better; but he lived to see such wisdom,

equity,

equity, and kindness in those methods of SERM. providence, as to attest, Truly God is good XIV. to Israel, to such as are of a clean heart; and to confess, I was as a beast before thee for ever questioning it, and much more for aspersing God's dealings, when he might have sooner understood the reason of them.

Exhort. Be affured God orders all things well, and that you shall understand how it is so, in what now appears least probable.

You ought now to conclude so concerning what's most severe or intricate; how can you do otherwise without denying a providence, or aspersing the persections of God, who is the arbiter of it? But tho' you acquiesce now in his steering the helm in his dark retirements, let Christ's answer to Peter add to your satisfaction, What I John xiii. do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt 7-know hereafter in this world, as far as necessary, but be sure fully in the other world. What seemed here most hideous, terrible, and unaccountable, will there afford matter of the highest praise and affecting admiration.

2. It was a very awful dispensation; I take away the desire of thine eyes with a stroke.

I SHALL represent it in a short paraphrase upon the several parts, which are placed as steps of aggravation.

(1.) I, I THY God, whose favour thou most valuest, whose anger thou most dread-Vol. II. A a est,

SERM. est, whose power is irresistible; I, from XIV. whom thou lookest for kind dealings, reliest on for all benefits, and from whom alone thou expectest relies in all troubles, upon thy addresses to me: yet, O Ezekiel, it's I who pronounce and execute this hard sentence.

- (2.) Take away from thee. I remove her not at a little distance, but as far as one world is from the other. I take her away not for a short while, but till time shall be no more; so as never more to be enjoyed here. I do not wound, but kill her, and lodge her among departed souls. It's not a limb, but her life, her soul that I take away, which will make a carcass odious.
- (3.) The defire of thine eyes. Not a remote relation, or one of thy children, but the wife of thy bosom, thy second self: Not a grievous, provoking, unpleasing, contemptible, or ungodly wife, but one who was fit to be the defire of thy eyes, who art a wife man, and a holy prophet. Not one that was pleafing for fometimes, but is fince alter'd: no, it is a wife, who is now the defire of thy eyes; now fo, and like to be still growing more amiable and pleasing. I take her away in the midst of your mutual fatisfaction, and pleafing fociety, when you reckoned on a long and happy life together, as mutual comforts in your pilgrimage, and helps for heaven. Then,

Then, then, I make such a separation be-SERM. tween you, as to put an end to your re-XIV. freshing expectations, as well as to past and present enjoyments. O Ezekiel, her person, her cares, her love, her gifts, her graces, are no longer helpful, except by reviews, which will as much heighten as allay thy grief. It's her I take to a place whence she can't be recall'd by all thy wants, complaints, or prayers: It's her whose place will be always empty, wherever thou didst expect to find her with greatest satisfaction.

(4.) With a stroke. Which notes both, 1. The fuddenness of her death: and, 2. The severity of the stroke. 1. The suddenness of her death: Neither thou nor she shall have any leifure. She shall have no warning to secure heaven, if she hitherto neglected it; nor thou further time to wean thyfelf, or be furnished with more patience to bear her departure. The dispatch is quick, ver. 18. (fo I spake to the people in the morning, and at even my wife died;) thou shalt be about my work in the morning, and find a dead wife by the evening. 2. The severity of the stroke: It was but one stroke, but I Sam! that is a killing one. He smote so, as not xxvi. 8; to need to smite the second time. Husband and wife, body and foul, are separated by this one blow of God's giving. It killed as certainly, and more speedily than the plague, as the Hebrew word fignifies. I Aa2 fhall

SERM. shall from this paraphrase collect some ob-

XIV. Jervations.

Obs. 5. Afflictive losses are under God's power and management. He has a right to take away our comforts, and his hand removes them, whenever they are taken away. He faith to Ezekiel, I take away the defire of thine eyes. He may do fo without controul, or cause of complaint, for he alienated not his own property in what he granted us the use of for a time, and that under certain regulations. It's our mercy, that none below him can spoil us of any thing without his permission. The devil could not take away a sheep, much less the children of Job, till God permitted it, and allowed his wind to fubserve their death for his own wife and just ends. On which ac-

Job i. 21. count Job faith, God has taken away; tho' it's the devil was the great mover, by soliciting God's permission, inclining the Sabeans and Chaldeans, and making use of fire and wind, as the means of Job's calamities. Instruments are guilty as far as they violate rules of justice or mercy; but tho' God abhors their gratifying their own lusts, which is all they design by the injuries they resolve to act; yet he over-rules their thoughts and agency, by determining them to one object, time, and means, rather than another, as may best subserve his holy purposes, whether for the trial or punishment of him who suffers. So that whether devils

or

or men be instruments, or that we are be-SERM. reaved by his more *immediate* hand, God XIV. is to be acknowledged; and as to every other fort of rebuke, we are sure, there is Amos in no evil in the city which the Lord has not 6.

Inf. 1. THEY who are impatient under losses, fret against the band of God. There our quarrels terminate, tho' we excuse ourselves, because second causes are more difinetly present to our minds. But tho' it may feem too foolish and horrid to impeach God directly of weakness, injustice, cruelty, or folly, yet we really do so in our fretful complaints; and still more directly so, as God's hand is more immediate in the affliction. Jonah pettishly wished in himself to die, and said, It's better for me to die than Jonah iv. live; and grew angry. What was the rea- 1, 3, 8, 9. fon? Nineveb was spared, and that gourd wither'd, of which he had been exceeding glad, when a shadow over him. Against whom was Jonah angry in this roile? It was against God, who spared the city, and prepared the worm by which that gourd had withered, which had fomewhat allay'd his grief, under the dreaded reproach of a false prophet. It was with God he was angry,

So it is with us, when our relations (pleasing gourds) are taken away by sickness, and we are impatient at it. For as this impatience is anger, so it is directed against God—against him for fending the

A a 3 disease,

SERM. disease, or not preventing it, or not healing XIV. it. If it be not against God that we are angry, against whom is it? Could any one hinder God's fending the disease, or prevent or heal it without him, however it came? If you think you are angry only at yourfelves for this or that omiffion of means. for the recovery of the deceased; or for your otherwise provoking God to take them away: I answer, As far as that omission was voluntary, it was your fault; but if it was not voluntary, and that you acted to the best of your knowledge, you are unjust to be angry with yourfelf. But suppose it was voluntary, and fo a fault, and that you, by other fins, provoked God to remove your relation; yet generally the impatient, by what they call anger at themfelves for these fins, do but frame an excuse to cover their being angry against God. They are not fo displeased with themfelves for other fins, tho' greater; they oft fret at their loss, when they think not of their fin with any remorfe; and much fooner forget their fin than their loft friend; nor does the hope of the pardon of their fin quiet them, when they remember their departed relation. Restrain therefore your impatience, lest you be found fretting against your just, good, and faithful God.

Inf. 2. THEY who profit not by afflictive losses, hear not the voice of God's rod.

OUR God is infinite in wisdom and SERM. goodness; therefore he has a good end in XIV. every rebuke. That end is his people's profit; and that kind of rebuke in every circumstance, is the fittest means to effect this profitable end. He is a God of love, Lam. iii. and therefore does not willingly afflict, nor 33. chastise for his pleasure. No, it is to make us partakers of his holiness, by mortifying Heb. xii. our fins, renewing our minds, exciting our 10. graces, weaning us from fenfible things, and fitting us for greater fervice and enjoyments. When you answer not these purposes, you refuse to hear the rod, and him Mic. vi. 9. who appointed it; i. e. the affliction, in the kind and nature of it, teacheth some things; and God, who appoints it, calls you thereby to all which you have need to learn. But if you profit not, you hear neither the voice of the rod, tho' enforced by God's appointing it; nor that which God further speaketh to you, when prepared by the rod to hearken.

OH what obstinacy and folly do they shew, who improve not by afflictions! obstinacy, in not yielding, when the Almighty is, by sharp methods, forcing them to submit; folly, in not only losing their comforts without any benefit, but by increased guilt exposing themselves to forer breaches, or to be left to themselves as irreclaimable. This last is the most terrible to all, except very obdurate wretches; for A a 4

SERM. when God once faith, Let them alone, it is XIV. next to that sentence, Depart from me, ye curfed, into everlasting fire.

Hof. iv. 17.

Obs. 6. DEATH takes away persons from all things in this lower world: I take

away the defire of thine eyes.

WE fay of our dead friends, they are taken away, and they are departed. Death is thus expressed in the scriptures: The Ifa. lvii.1. righteous is taken away from the evil to 2 Tim. iv. come; the time of my departure is at hand; now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace. Luke ii. The reason of such expressions is evident; 29. for when persons die, they leave estates and dwellings; these know them no more; they quit their present work, and the business of this present life; their honourable places are empty; the figure they made is

become a cypher.

DEATH separates the foul from the body till the refurrection; when God shall bring out of his repositories that of our present body, which shall be sufficient to make it our former individual body rifen again; tho' made incorruptible, spiritual, glorious, and immortal, by the indwelling Spirit. When men die, they leave this earth with its concernments, and are removed to another region, which has its proper objects, fociety, and employs. David may be judg'd to look beyond his bodily health, and to be defirous to enter into the unfeen world in the best frame of spirit, and afraid to quit this this under backflidings, when he crieth, O SERM. fpare me, that I may recover strength before XIV. I go hence, and be no more. But whether body or foul, or both, be intended, he reckons that by death he went from this world, and was no more to continue an inhabitant of it.

Inf. 1. HE is foolish, in the worst sense, who takes his portion in the things of this world.

THERE needs no other reason to demonstrate it besides this; he must leave all these things behind, when himself must live for ever in another place. He will be taken away, and carrieth nothing with him Pfal. xlix. when he dieth; his glory shall not descend 17. after him. It's the character of wicked men, they have their portion in this life: Pfal. xvii. By God's just judgment they have nothing 14. but misery after this life, which limiteth their portion to a short compass: By their own carnality and folly, they take their portion in the things of life. So that the character declares them both miserable and vile men, wretched in their end, and fordid and fottish in their temper, who can place their happiness in what's so far below themselves in worth and duration; so far from the end of their creation, and the true good whereof they are capable, and which they forfeit for the fake of these trifles, that fo inordinately gratify them no otherwise, than as they are agreeable to their brutish

SERM. and devilish lustings, which war against

XIV. their fouls.

In what confusion will a man in this Pet. ii. state be, when he shall hear that furprizing challenge from an irrefistible God?

Thou fool, this night shall thy foul be requi-Luke xii. red of thee: And then, Whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? Whofoever shall enjoy them, the dead fool has fo loft his propriety in, and benefit by them, that the rich man cannot procure a

Luke xvi. little water to cool his tongue.

THEREFORE pray for wisdom, that you may be effectually convinced of the vanity of riches, friends, honour, and all the things of this world, so as to moderate your love to, pursuits after, and delight in them. Rebuke all trust in them, and apply to this, before your feafon of providing a better portion is past; for the emptiness you will then experience, will only aggravate your tormenting disappointment, and that for ever.

Inf. 2. MENS greatest concern, is to what place they are carried, when taken

away from hence.

22.

You are not annihilated, but removed. When you go out of this world, you go into another, of which we know certainly no more than is told us by divine revelation. But by the word of God we are affured, that when you are taken away, Luke xvi. you will be carried into Abrabam's bosom,

or

or imprisoned in a state of a lesser misery, Serm. expecting a sull destruction in hell. What care and concern becomes us in a state of trial, when the issues are so extremely different, as compleated happiness and misery? Oh, unbelieving soul, these are realities; and all things compared therewith, will soon appear scarce worth a thought. Ought you not then, with solicitousness, often ask, Whither am I going? where must I for ever be?

SAINTS esteem themselves here to be pilgrims, because they look for a better coun-Heb. xi. try: Whereas the sensual eat, drink, and 13, 16. pass their time away, but dare not think of any state beyond the present. Heaven they cannot hope for, so as to make any serious enquiry into the grounds of their hopes, for they know they are false and vain. Think of hell they dare not, lest the pleasures of sin (on which they resolve) should be embittered by anticipated terrors.

Consider where this must end: you are going towards another world, and draw nearer to it day by day; as a present life runs out, the world to come approacheth. Dare you leave it to an uncertain adventure, how it shall be with you, whether heaven or hell receive you? Can the unprepared be safe? or he that never thinks or provides for a future state, be prepared for it? Or can he be prepared at all, who is condemned by the gospel, which is the

lowest

5.

SERM. lowest rule of judgment? The decisive sen-XIV. tence will not be arbitrary, but by rule, and that without respect of persons. If that Rom, ii. rule were the law of innocence, none could 11, 16. escape; but tho' the gospel rule does admit the falvation of all penitent believers, yet it as truly condemns all impenitent unbelievers; and the Lord Jesus will, as judge, pronounce no other fentence. By that he will decide the case of all men who lived under the gospel; he will do it infallibly, for he knoweth all mens hearts and ways: He will execute that fentence effectually, for he is almighty; and it's as impossible to

refift him, as to deceive him.

THEREFORE be importunate for the affistance of the Holy Spirit, that you may know your state, and impartially examine

2 Cor. xiii. your selves: Prove your own selves: Know you not, that Christ is in you, except you be reprobates? He must be received by faith as an entire Saviour, to secure you, and to reign in your hearts; yea, your temper must be framed in a conformity to his image, or you'll be cast-aways, unfit to be admitted into the heavenly mansions. Omit no longer to ask yourselves, Where in the unfeen state shall I be lodged, when I depart? There my misery or happiness will be real, endless, perfect, and unmixed; which of these will be my lot? Let all the unconverted pray and labour now for fincere grace and holiness; delay not this a moment; for

when

when you go out of this world, you are SERM. taken away from all the means of grace, XIV. from all the helps and hopes of a faving change. What thy hand findeth to do, do it Eccl. ix. with all thy might; for there's no work, nor low device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, (the state of the dead) whither thou art going. All thy convictions, contrivances, and labour there, will be unavailable to obtain that wisdom which is accompanied with salvation.

Obs. 7. THE young and healthy may

be fuddenly furprized by death.

I TAKE away the defire of thine eyes with a stroke; one fudden blow dispatches her. All die not by chronical lingring difeases; so frail are men, that we are crushed Jobiv. 19. before the moth; fooner and more eafily kill'd, than a moth is crushed. You know not how foon you may be that one who dieth Job xxi. in his full strength, being wholly at ease and 23. quiet. God needs not lay a long fiege, but can, in a moment, storm this tabernacle of clay, and blow out that lamp of life, which he wonderfully preserveth every moment; it's he who holdeth our foul in life, that it Pfal. lxvi. expires not with every breath; if he with-9. holds his Spirit, we die. We have more instances of sudden deaths than usual; you may become the next, and will be fo, if God direct the fatal arrow to you. He is no more engaged to give you an hour's warning, than to those who had less notice.

SERM. tice. Nor are you more able than they to XIV. lengthen life one minute, if he arrest you by death, without a moment's summons.

Inf. It's our wisdom to be always ready

to die.

Our Redeemer's caution belongs to us Mat. xxiv. in this case, Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh. Death will feize and carry you hence, and you may have no notice of its approach, but be furprized when likeliest to live long, or doing some vile thing that must increase its terror. Would you die prepared, then be never unprepared; for you may be struck in the moment of the greatest unfitness. Many that resolve to be good in old age, are taken away in their youth. Too many referve repentance to a fick-bed, but are kill'd by a sudden acci-The most watchful find dying a great work, from the sense of a strict tribunal, and an awful eternity. What may the heedless find it, yea, and must, if conscience is not seared by infidelity. Each of you are either in a state of fin, or in a state of grace; its needful that both make ready.

1. You that are in a state of sin, be al-

way ready, by getting into Christ.

Heb. iv.7. Whilst it is to day, hear his voice, and harden not your hearts. He invites you, he pleads with you to repent and believe in him. As long as you reject him, by difored

obedience to his gospel-call, you are not SERM. ready for death; for if you repent not, you XIV. shall perish; if you believe not, you shall die in your sins. Death will be found a luke xiii. king of terrors, for it brings you into a John viii. state, where you shall feel the pain and loss contained in the curse of the law, and Heb. x. the forer threatnings of the gospel. At loss contained in the curse of the law, and Heb. x. the forer threatnings of the gospel. At loss contained in the curse of the law, and Heb. x. the forer threatnings of the gospel. At loss contained in the curse of the law, and Heb. x. the forer threatnings of the gospel. At loss contained in the curse of the law, and Heb. x. the forer threatnings of the gospel. At loss contained in the curse of the law, and Heb. x. the soften the soften is miserable; should you die now, you are undone for ever. There's no safety but in slying to Christ for resuge, as the gospel directs; as yet he waits, to-morrow your day of grace may end; yea, this night your soul may be required. Triste not: Because there is wrath, John xxxvi. beware, lest be take thee away with a stroke; 18. then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.

2. You who are in a *state of grace*, be always ready, by abiding in Christ, walking worthy of him, and keeping in a good

frame.

Perseverance is as necessary as conversion; For if any man draw back, my Heb. x. foul shall have no pleasure in him. This is 38. God's caution to prevent apostasy; and the connection is true between apostasy and ruin, tho' eventually neither happen.

Untrimmed lamps also will disquiet, (tho' Mat. xxv. there be oil) when a midnight-cry surprifeth. Decays, doubts, and a remiss temper, unfit a man for death; so do neglects, unfruitfulness, and every particular fall unrepented of. Matters are not wisely managed,

SERM. naged, if you allow yourselves a moment XIV. in a practice or frame, in which you would be loth to be found when death arrests you: for in that moment you may be furprized. But you shew christian wisdom, when you think, are, and do that every hour, as if it were to be your last. Therefore avoid whatever nourisheth your doubts, mortify your remaining corruptions, dispatch all present duty, fill up your places, keep a heavenly frame, employ your talents faithfully for God, strengthen just hopes, converse much with heaven, keep up intimate communion with God, and, by christian growth, add grace to grace, as to forts, degrees, and exercise. This is the method to be always 2 Pet. i. 5, ready: So an entrance shall be ministred unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Let death then arrest one never so fuddenly, yet bleffed is that fervant whom

ing. Thus work therefore whilst it's day, John ix. 4. for the night cometh, wherein no man can work.

Obs. 8. THE wife ought to be the de-

his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so do-

fire of the husband's eyes.

This is the epithet and description of Ezekiel's wife, which argued a great gift from God, a wife choice in Ezekiel, and a good and agreeable temper and behaviour in the wife. All men ought to make choice of such as are likely to be so, and

not

not rashly, or from covetousness, or other Serm. mean considerations, take a soolish, grace-XIV. less, froward, or unagreeable person, into this relation. On the other hand, wives should so behave themselves, as to be pleasing in the sight of the husband; for their mutual usefulness, safety, and comfort, are concerned herein. Husbands also should account their own wives desirable, and so carry it, as to encline them to become acceptable, and encourage them when such. An husband is allowed, yea, commanded, to rejoice in his wife, and be ravished with Prov. v. her love.

THO' I enlarged no further in this fermon on this observation, yet I think it not unuseful to add some things I had occasion to mention in another place, from this part of the text, the desire of thine eyes.

## SECT. II.

1. People, defigning marriage, should make choice of such persons as are likely to be desirable, and pleasing to them. So far Sampson was in the right, when he said, Get her for me, for she pleaseth me well. It's Judg. xiv. a great snare to marry such whose person, 3 temper, or behaviour, are alienating, or unlikely to endear: For it's hard to esteem a yoke-sellow, where there's nothing valuable, or delight where there is nothing lovely. It's dangerous, or at least uncom-Vol. II. Bb fortable,

SERM, fortable, to be forced always to reason and XIV. plead one's felf to a due behaviour to wife or husband. Wisdom would direct people to be fure of that in a yoke-fellow, which will draw forth love, cherish affection, and deserve esteem. But it's the height of folly. not to avoid every one, where you find that which is fure to breed dislike, procure contempt, and cause a coldness and weariness of each other. Here's no likelihood to find the defire of the eyes.

Quest. WHAT are those things which are likely to binder husband and wife from being the desire of the eyes to each other?

Answer. In the general, those things which cause a great unsuitableness between them. But there is fuch variety in people, that it's hard to instance any things, which will have the like effect on all persons; for that's agreeable to one, which is not fo to another. However I will hint fome particulars.

I. ANY outward defect or deformity, to which you still feel an unsubdued averfion, before marriage is confummated. Some can chearfully bear with that face, figure, or behaviour, which another loaths. He that can take delight in a person, notwithstanding a blemish, or defect, runs no great risque; but such as cannot, do lay a

Gen. xxix. net for fatan to use with advantage. Leah's tender eyes lessened her always in Jacob's 17, 30. affection.

2. Violent passion, frowardness, or ill-na-Serm. ture, unless you are sure your prudence XIV. and patience can render these easy to yourselves, and safe to your family. The consinual droppings of a contentious wise (or Prov. xix. husband) will hardly encrease love; nor 13. one be much pleased, when forced to the corner of a house-top, to avoid the brawls Prov. xxv. of a scolding wise. Such a husband will 24. be as uneasy to a wise. Never disregard a good nature, or at least an agreeable temper, in the person you take into this near relation.

- 3. Great weakness of understanding, if your temper leads you to delight in ingenious persons, and to despise all others. If that be your genius, scarce any thing will put you more to it, than to keep up an esteem of husband or wife, when their solly is at every turn discovered. Prudence Prov. xix; is a great ingredient in that wife, who is a 14-blessing from the Lord; and much more in a husband: but either will be apt to think themselves exposed by the other's dulness and indiscretion.
- 4. Ungodliness, if you are truly pious. If you are graceless, your like may please you above a better person. Whilst you are spiritually dead, the want of a spiritual life in a yoke-sellow, will be little minded. Two dead carcasses can be together without offence; but a graceless husband or wise, will be a grievous burden

SERM. to a renewed mind, and a plague to their XIV. offspring. When God converted a Corinthian husband, how uneasy did an unbe-1 Cor. vii. lieving wife prove? And as uneasy was the unbelieving husband to the converted wife. Be fure they would not have chosen such, had they been christians before marriage.

THEREFORE be afraid to match with a wicked person. Their vices ought to deter your listening to the greatest inducements; for what a torment will it prove, to think your own flesh hates God, and is abhorred by him. Will you long esteem the devil's image, or be fafe or easy where he ruleth? What a loss and grief will it be, to want that help and excitement which a gracious yoke-fellow would afford, by prayer, edifying discourse, and good example; much Job ii. 9. more to be solicited to curse God, as Job was by his wife? . It will be afflictive, to be denied the advantage (in fo near a relation) of uttering the moans of your own fouls, and imparting your experiences and comforts.

> GODLINESS often renders the wife hateful to the ungodly man, and the husband to the ungodly woman. What disputes and brawls must arise between such, when different opinions abate the quiet, and diminish love, where both are godly. But above all, the very foul of the better relative (as well as their offspring) is in danger to become worse, if not wicked, by ill example, discou-

discouragements, temptations, and a desire Serm. to please. Solomon's wives turned his heart XIV. from God. Infection is more easily communicated than health. The bad is not so easily reformed, as the good corrupted, because sin has much to befriend it in all of us; the power whereof is daily seen, in many hopeful persons becoming irreligious by bad husbands and wives. Parents, and single persons in treaties of marriage, would shew less unbelief, and more of the power 1 Cor. vii. of godliness, if, In the Lord, were justly 39. the posy of the wedding-ring, and chiefly regarded in matrimony.

5. Great inequality in age, unless you are very certain of answerable temperance. Satan often gets advantage hereby, and the conjugal affection of one or both is frequently lost. Therefore if you marry one much younger than yourself, you had need to be well assured of the sobriety of their temper; if one much older, be as-

fured of your own.

I HAVE set before you what you should ward against before you marry. If you venture on these, you must vainly hope to find the pleasure of your eyes in a married state. Many miserable matches may warn you from suffering covetousness to bribe you, or ambition to tempt you, or importunity to force you, or fancy to bewitch you, to a disregard of these cautions. But if loud warnings avail not, dear-bought Bb3 experience

SERM. experience will convince, that neither XIV. estates, titles, nor the gratification of a vain fancy, will long maintain affection, or prevent mischiefs, when you betray

yourselves into these hazards.

AND yet how many parents fell the health, the comfort, the peace, yea, the fouls of their children, for a little pelf, when they dispose of them in wedlock? and too few children are advised by such parents as would direct more religiously

and prudently.

2. Married folk ought to esteem, delight in, and desire each other. The wise should be the desire of the busband's eyes, and the husband the same in the wise's eyes. When it's thus, you enjoy the great blessing of a married state. On many accounts that state needs this blessing, and without this, its bitter and dangerous. Disagreement and dislikes will embitter all other comforts. You are commanded to rejoice in each other; but this is impossible, if love be altogether wanting; for that's the strong excitement, Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest.

Prov. v. that's the Eccl. ix. 9.

3. MARRIED persons should be wise, and careful so to contrive and order things, that they may be desirable in each other's eyes. Neglects in this will disappoint you of that blessing you had well prepared for in a right choice. A due observation of it may prevent the expected mischiefs of an

:11

ill choice, and so far rectify it. This di- SERM. rection has two parts. XIV.

(1.) So manage things, as to be defirable

to your yoke-fellow.

Avoid every thing that may offend or nauseate. Beware of what may expose you to contempt or diflike. Order your tongue, behaviour, and all your ways, as may best create love, and procure esteem? Would you be loved? Strive to be lovely. Would you be esteemed? see that you be, and do what's valuable. If you are a Nabal, 1Sam.xxv. will Abigail honour you? If you bid Job ii. 10. curse God, he'll say, You talk as a foolish woman. Let the wife in all lawful things, therefore, approve herself to her husband's liking, and folicitously care to please bim. I Cor. vii. The fame is the husband's duty; and not 34, 35. to be bitter, infolent, vexatious, or foolish, 19. but dwell with his wife according to know- 1 Pet. iii. ledge. Many of both fexes forfeit respect 7. by debasing themselves; and must not you bare the blame, if you are less desired, when you render yourselves undesirable? Folly and imperiousness will bring contempt and Esth. i. 18. wrath. Be and do what's proper to your place and relation, and it's probable you shall be esteemed and loved; if not, the fault's not your's, and you'll find favour with God, and peace within.

(2.) WATCH your own minds, and do your utmost to make your yoke-fellow

desirable to you.

B b 4

SERM. Do not strictly observe each other's XIV. weaknesses, unless they be removeable, and with a concern to redress them; instead of ruminating on their faults, often think of what's valuable and praife-worthy. Has he or she true grace? let that cover the want of beauty, for it's far more excellent: and if such as have it be despis'd, it's a contempt of Christ in one of his members. Is there good-nature and affection? that must cover the defect of wit and brighter parts. Should husband or wife be so unhappy, as to be posses'd of none of these, yet consider it's my husband, this is my wife; even this puts the conscience under bonds to a good carriage, and to as much love as is possible to be raised by prayer, prudence, confideration, and confinement of conjugal affection from all others. It's my own flesh by God's ordinance; and being fuch, it must be loved and cherished. Who neglects his own arm because it's weak, withered, or wounded?

Eph. v. 28.

> THEY are the persons you received into this near relation. If they have been unagreeable before marriage, as to person, humour, or parts, bear it now with the more contentedness, because it's the natural fruit of your indifcreet choice. If by any providence they are since become less suitable; to be discontented, is to quarrel with the hand of God, and add to the calamity of the innocent. If their graceless state be your grievance,

grievance, endure it with the greater fub- SERM. mission, as it is the punishment of your XIV. finful choice, if you were then a convert: And if you were converted fince, let the fense of God's distinguished grace induce you to pity and a tender carriage. But be it before or fince, it's your duty and interest to do your utmost for their recovery, and avoid whatever you know in yourself a hindrance to it. If you fucceed, you'll have the comfort of living as heirs together 1 Pet. iii. of the grace of God, to your own benefit, 7. and that of posterity. If you succeed not, their dying miserable will cost you forrow for them, but no piercing reflections on your own finful neglects.

I HOPE some readers may improve, and none misinterpret this inserted digression, tho' less proper for a funeral discourse.

Obs. 9. Husband and wife, however defirable, must certainly be separated by death, and it may be suddenly.

THE band between them holds till then, but death dissolves it, notwithstanding the strongest desires to continue together. Great affection makes a separation to be felt like a tearing limb from limb; but a wise providence indulgeth not creatures fond desires, but fixeth the bounds of our satisfaction by rules more sure and sit than we would prescribe. He knows how long it's safe to yield comfort by one channel; and when

SERM. it becomes dangerous to continue the same XIV. way, left by inordinate affection we might be enfnared; or to prevent a disappointment, which he forefaw by a change of disposition or behaviour. Therefore when the reason for separation is become ripe, he spares no longer, however entreated. and often so surprizeth by a quick dispatch, that there's scarce room for prayer.

Inf. HUSBANDS and wives should live together, as they who may foon be fepa-

rated.

THIS is wifdom, and will be fo accounted by the thoughtful, when a separation is made; for this will reduce your roving minds, and shew the folly of taking such a fatisfaction in each other, as if you must never part. This will convince you of the fin of all that undue behaviour which is much cherished, by not foreseeing those reviews that cannot be avoided. Therefore fo moderate your affections, that the furvivor may neither become unufeful or fcandalous by exceffive forrow; nor be tormented with felf-accufations, that their excessive love procured the death of the deceased. And neglect not such a circumfpect behaviour, as to avoid any thing that must give bitter thoughts, whether you be the dying or furviving persons, for both will be forced to reflect on your miscarriages, the one when dying, the other afterwards.

Must

MUST you part so soon! then improve SERM, each other for heaven, with a diligence XIV. becoming the short and uncertain time of doing this, and the vanity of wishing you had done more after death has made a separation. Nor will it be always unseasonable to mind each other, that a time of parting will come; for this will excite diligence in your mutual duties. And if you have children, you'll be more intent to train them up for God, to whose care the dying must commit them. Nor will such discourses be unuseful to a better preparedness to bear the loss, when one shall be removed. This leads me to the third general head.

III. God's charge to the prophet, as to his behaviour upon the death of his wife: Yet neither shalt thou mourn nor

weep, nor thy tears run down.

ALL the changes of life have their proper duties, and in such duties we ought to exercise ourselves; for those changes are opportunities for, and calls to such duties. One part of the duty upon this occasion, if the prophet's case had been lest common with others, was to mourn in a godly sort. The tokens of sorrow are allowed the priest for near relations, tho not for others: Lev. xxi. there is a time to weep; but when is it sea-2. sonable, if not at the death of a desirable wife? Sorrow at such a time is necessary from the innocent instincts of nature; it disposeth

30.

SERM. disposeth to hear and obey God's voice by XIV. the stroke; and not to mourn, would be to despise the chastisement of the Lord.

> THEREFORE either Ezekiel was forbidden only the outward marks of forrow, or it was a positive extraordinary precept, with supernatural affiftance, enabling him to obferve it: And so it was enjoined on him as a prophetick sign to serve a peculiar purpose, and not to be a rule to others.

> But the we are not obliged to forbear all mourning as he was; yet what God faid to Ezekiel suggests to us a moderation in our grief, and prohibits excessive mourning under the loss of the best of wives. Due limits are prescribed to all men, but especially to ministers, because they are by their example to confirm the truth of the doctrine of fubmission to God's hand, and not tempt people to think it's impracticable by any; and that therefore either it's no command of God, or none can feel that power in religion as to comply with it.

> Obs. 10. Excessive forrow must be avoided, tho' the dearest relations are taken away.

Sorrow is allowed in proportion to the loss, but religion and reason set the bounds Cor. vii. which ought not to be exceeded: Let him who weeps, be as if he wept not; for the fashion of this world passeth away. Mourn with the indifference becoming dying men, for dying things under God's disposal.

Quest. When is forrow excessive?

Anf.

Anf. SORROW is excessive, when at- SERM. tended with fretting thoughts against God; XIV. when it hinders a thankful fense of remain-Prov. xix. ing mercies; when it indisposeth to all de- 3. light in God, and his covenant-bleffings; I Chron. when it unfits for the worship of God, or vii. 22,23. the duties of one's place; when it fo dif-7. orders the mind, that it cannot attend to Gen. God's voice by the rod, and the confide-xxxvii.35. rations which should relieve us under it; when it impairs the reason or the body, by its intenfeness, or too long continuance. No benefit we received by our relations, no Job xvii. need we can have of them hereafter, no cir-7. cumstance in their death, will justify such excefs.

Sorrow must be esteemed immoderate, when it produceth such esfects; for this exceeds the rule God prescribes, and is so provoking in his sight, that for a punishment thereof, he often with-holds his support, adds forer afflictions, and permits satan to take advantage by mens excessive forrow, to tempt them to atheism, self-murder, and other evils.

Repr. This may well reprove excessive grief for dead relations. The inordinate forrow for dead friends passeth with most for a small sin, if not innocent, yea, applauded and indulged as a good-natured and kind thing; nevertheless it shews great weakness of soul, and includes a world of sin; for excessive sorrow is impatience to a

high

SERM. high degree. It proceeds from inordinate XIV. felf-love, and an extreme affection to creatures, and the things of this world. It argues either a disbelief of a providence, or a great dislike of its methods, as foolish, unjust, and cruel. There's a mixture of foolish foftness and pride in him who is guilty, for he cannot bear what's common to men, but thinks he deserves to be exempted from the common lot, and yet can feem to relieve himself by useless complaints, tho' he knows he is past hope of recovering what he has loft. In proportion to the excess of forrow, God is less loved as the supreme good, he is distrusted as unable to repair or fanctify the loss, and unthankfully slighted, as shewing no kindness in benefits still enjoyed, and to have done his worst, in taking away that one which is removed. Ought not a serious christian dread what's so finful and near to madness? Must not the guilty blame themfelves, and fear the iffue?

Exb. You the relations of the deceased,

fet christian bounds to your forrow.

I CONFESS, that stroke which took her away, gives a deep wound to many. The husband is deprived of a defirable wife, whom he greatly affected as such, and still found growing reason for it.

THE godly parents have lost a lovely daughter, who commended their pious education and example by her religious course, as well as dutiful behaviour; up-

on account whereof they loved her more and SERM.

more, as her life was lengthned. XIV.

Brothers and fifters are separated from a delightful useful fifter, with whom they lived in cordial amity, to their mutual

comfort and advantage.

A POOR infant is the greater loser, because so young as not to know her fitness and concern to promote his godly education; nor further benefited by her as to his chief interests, than as her own covenantitle, her sincere dedication of him, and her many recorded prayers for him, are available.

SORROW is unavoidable, and a duty, where a just sense of this rebuke prevails; nor can it be confined to relations, wherein all of her intimate acquaintance are sharers.

But it's not so necessary to justify your moderate sorrow, as to warn you against excess; allow not that, suffer it not insensibly to steal upon you. God has smitten, who cannot injure you: He intends your spiritual good, which you will not fail to experience, if you are teachable. You may by this surprize be helped to live and die better, and God come to posses that of your affection, which it may be exceeded towards her, or at least that of it which she is now above receiving.

WHEN you weep, let the faltest tears be spent for every fault, that upon present enquiries you find to have provoked God to

remove

SERM. remove this valuable comfort; lofe not this XIV. afflictive feafon, by neglecting that fearch at present, for you may better discover such provocations now, than when she was pleafantly enjoy'd; and a godly forrow for what

2 Cor. vii. you become convinced of, worketh not

death, but a repentance unto life.

OVERLOOK not the comfort which God by her dispensed to you whilst she lived. Many have enjoyed less in a far longer life than her's, which exceeded not more years than twenty-five. Yea, how many in that short compass have dishonoured religion, and broke the hearts of some of their best relations.

WATCH, especially, that you forrow not Theff. iv. 13. as without hope; for though her death was fudden (well at noon, and dead in the evening) yet she long expected and prepared for It's true, she is taken away, but she continued the defire of your eyes to the last, and Christ has taken her to bimself, and will

ver. 14. at his glorious appearance bring her with him, to reunite the body in a meetness for heavenly places, where she (and you, if

ver. 17,18. faithful) shall be ever with the Lord. Com-

fort one another with these words.

You who were most intimate with her, are fully perfuaded of this: And must not that restrain forrow within christian bounds? unless you indulge that self-love which regrets her present happiness; for by death a believer is immediately cleanfed from all fin, released

the divine image (that truest loveliness) and XIV. advanced to those sights, employs, and enjoyments above, of which the best are incapable in our present state. Nor is your hope concerning her, without a satisfying reason, when her abhorrence of being thought better than she was, the honesty and plainness of her temper, cause her intimates proverbially to say, That they who knew her, were sure to know the worst of her.

SHE renounced and despised the world, (that common rival with God) and took God, Christ, and heaven, for her portion; here her end and heart were fixed. And as a means of greater safety and improvement therein, she preferred a godly minifer for a husband, before any other person, with far greater advantages as to this world. Nor was she disappointed, for both grace and spiritual comfort did grow exceedingly.

In that relation she was faithful and affectionate, forward to receive good advice, delighted in conversing with her husband about divine matters, whereby both were improved, and their endearment increased, in proportion to what they saw of God in each other: yea, she was a spur to his diligence, as well as a refreshment in his labours. She was ever ready to be inform'd in all things wherein duty and conscience

Vol. II. Cc were

XIV. in following what was right. The habitation of God's house was her delight. On all the ordinances there administred, she attended with great solemnity and care to

profit.

BEFORE her admission to the Lord's Supper, she (to the great joy of her husband) gave an affecting account of the state of her foul, and made most fatisfying difcoveries of her repentance from the heart; a faith in Christ, resolved upon any thing for the enjoyment of him; a confent to the whole of the gospel-covenant, with a furrender of herfelf and all to God in Christ. Whereupon, with mutual tears of tenderness and joy, they afresh resolved to walk together to heaven, and watch over one another in whatever related thereto. This fhe fulfilled, by being a faithful monitor of whatever was amiss in him, a patient sufferer under great pain, and a fincere observer of God's precepts. The last facrament The was very earnestly defirous to receive, because, as she said, It may be the last that I may ever receive.

HER value for baptism was such, that she presented her former child, and intended to do the same on this very day for her last child. The reason she gave for presenting the child with her own hands at that ordinance, was, that thereby she laid claim to her own share in the covenant-savour, and

should

should more fensibly bind herself to his SERM. christian education. But instead of pub-XIV. lickly dedicating her child, she, with the foretasts of heaven, solemnly surrendered her own soul to God thro' Christ Jesus, in whom she trusted, and is gone to that happy place, where her husband and she usually agreed to meet, when they were parting for any time.

HER death was sudden, yet it was long expected, and of late her apprehensions of its nighness were more remarkable, and observed by many. These thoughts of its near approach abated not her chearfulness, tho' they quicken'd her preparation, saying, There was nothing in death so much to be seared as unpreparedness; and it was the beight of madness to have any thing to do at that time, when mere dying was work

enough.

Being, the night before her death, discoursed with of the more blessed society above, than that for which alone of all worldly things she could become willing to stay here; with a mixture of smiles and tears, acknowledg'd, that where evidences for heaven were clear, and some true foretastes of it, it rather required some patience and submission to tarry out of heaven so long; and all that's lovely or desirable in any creature, comes from, and is to be found in the God we go to, infinitely beyond what it can be in any creature.

Cc2

THE

SERM. THE communion she enjoyed with God XIV. (as her chief good) in this lower world, was fo vitally relished, as to create a longing for its full enjoyment, tho' by a separation from a husband, in whom she delighted to the utmost bounds of lawfulness. She was taken away not by force, but with a full confent, her defires being strongly raised to the mansions prepared by her best beloved Jesus, and mortified to the honours, pleasures, riches, and all the vain gaieties of this lower world. Yea, she often defired, that the apparel prepared for her marriage, were well wore out, that she might show the difference between her own choice and compliance with custom.

DEATH found her on the wing for the bigher regions; and the' feemingly appre-

hensive of some respite, yet still dropping directions about her funeral, as impressed with a persuasion that it could be at no great distance. And so it proved; for the' she joined with her husband in familyprayer, and eat a breakfast with him, who went from her to the publick worship, unapprehenfive of any danger; yea, after two hours rest, she was chearful, and so well as to get up; yet no sooner sat in her chair, than the received the stroke, by which, in five hours, the was taken away; taken

from a world of fin, imperfection, and forrow too, however fweeten'd by kind and tender relations. O happy fabbath!

not

not only to be rid of all that's grievous, but SERM. to be received into the affembly of the fouls XIV. of just men made perfect, to join in their folemnities, and share in their exalted privileges, with faculties improved to a due meetness for both.

THE use all of us should make of this providence, is to endeavour, by the grace of Christ, to be so safe and prepared for eternity, that the most fudden death may neither endanger, nor disturb us. To promote this, I shall recommend two passages uttered by our deceased fister: One is, that the was willing to know the utmost of her duty, and the worst of her condition. The other is, that discoursing of the near approach of the time of her delivery, she said to a near relation, I fear no bodily pains; one pang of the horror of conscience, is more intolerable than all the pangs of child-bearing.

A BELIEVING foul acting always under the power of these, may chearfully converse with death, and bear its sudden arrests in peace; for faith is best evidenced by universal obedience: And that hope is least likely to disappoint, when all that feems to make it suspicious, is impartially examined; and none will be fo watchful, to avoid all that diffurbs our inward peace, (which all prefumptuous fin will do) as they who fear the pangs of conscience above the forest pains. Such a one can hardly be bribed

Cc3

SERM. bribed or affrighted to transgress. Our XIV. fister's dread of an accusing conscience, was a great help to her walking circumspectly, and dying with such peace and comfort. For this guarded and fortify'd her against temptation; and whenever she offended, excited her repentance, and hasten'd her application to the blood of Christ for remission and healing.

Believe it all of you, a vain mind, a feared conscience, presumptuous hopes, and the allowance of yourselves in any wilful omissions or offences, will fill you with horror in a dying hour, unless you are so harden'd by infidelity, that nothing short of bell can force you to consider. But if you

Phil. iv. 7. have due regard to conscience, that peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.



## An Enquiry into the present Duty of PROTESTANT DISSENTERS.

Preached Jan. 22. 1711-12.

MARK X. 29, 30.

And Jesus answered, and said, Verily I say unto you, there is no man that bath left house, or brethren, or fisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel's; but be shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and fifters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecution; and in the world to come eternal life.



UR bleffed Saviour having de- SERM. tected the hypocrify of the XV. ruler, who feemed very intent to obtain eternal life, he condescends to answer St. Peter's

demand, by the words of the text: where you find,

Cc4

I. THE

I. THE cause wherein the fincere fol-XV. lowers of Christ are engaged. Here he expreffes it, For my fake and the gospel's. In Matt. x. 29. it's for my name's fake; in Luke xviii. 29. it's for the kingdom of God's fake. By espousing, adhering to, and acting pursuant to these, the christian propofes to himself the obtaining eternal life. Christ Jesus is the head of the gospel-kingdom; the gospel is the rule and law of it; persons devoted to Christ are the subjects of it: his authority, rights, truths, interests, and honour, they are to maintain and promote by all just means.

> 2. THE sufferings to which they are exposed by their faithfulness to Christ and his interests: They leave houses, &c. i. e. we must renounce the most desirable things which oppose our closing with, and acceptance of

him, as our Lord and chief good. This is Mat. xiii. called, felling all for the pearl of price. His fubjects must also refuse the greatest advantages which would bribe them to be disloyal to him, or treacherous in what concerns his interests and honour; and they must willingly consent to suffer the loss of all their worldly enjoyments, which they cannot posless without renouncing his truth, violating his rules, injuring his rights, or neglecting what's incumbent on them, for the defence and advancement of any of these.

> Our Lord here enumerates many things, of which nature is fond, as dear relations and estate.

estate. Essewhere he adds reputation, li-Serm. berty, ease, and life itself, Mark viii. 39. XV. All that makes up the idol of a carnal mind, must be parted with; and the contrary exercises, which are most ungrateful to sense, must be endured, whenever our christian profession requires it. He is no true disciple of Christ, who does not, from the heart, resolve and engage to do this, if called to it; he is no persevering saint, nor an heir of glory, who suffers not imprisonment, poverty, loss of relations, torments, yea, death itself, rather than forsake Christ and his cause.

3. The believer's advantage by his greatest sufferings for Christ: In this time an hundred-fold, and in the world to come eternal life. A point not easily believed, therefore our Lord does solemnly attest it, Verily, I say unto you, &c. Lest any should think the benefit was designed only for the apostles, or some eminent saints, he extends it to every one that suffers what's necessary to express his sincere devotedness and adherence to the Lord Jesus and his cause: There's no man that has left houses, &c.

Obser. THEY who leave most for Christ and his gospel, shall be abundant gainers by it.

I HAVE in three fermons treated of this observation in the method following.

i. I HAVE explained when persons may be said to leave these things for Christ and his gospel.

2. As

SERM. 2. As also whence it is, that men, by ad-XV. hering to Christ, should be exposed to such hardships. Under which head, I also gave you a large account of the great purposes our Lord subserves, in erecting, maintaining, and advancing his kingdom by these fore trials of his followers.

> 3. I HAVE proved fully, that they who lose and suffer most for Christ, are great gainers even in this world, by being not only free from the prefent horror and plagues of apostates, but also by the divine comforts, spiritual supports, and profit, from what they endure; as also by a great bleffing on what external benefits are continued; which I demonstrated to be in themfelves, and in the judgment of the most wife, and experienced, exceedingly better than all the temporal good they can lofe for the fake of Christ. 2. In the world to come, the advantage is inconceivable, as appeared by comparing the positive good of eternal life, with all the good we can lose by our fidelity; and comparing the endless misery thereby prevented, with the greatest evils it can expose us to in time.

> But these things, with that part of the application I made in the former discourses, I pass over, and shall now proceed to a fourth

inference.

Inf. 4. IT is true wisdom to be well and rightly instructed, in what concerns the honour and interest of the Lord Jesus in

our

our day and place, and to be always ready SERM. to quit and lose all for the sake thereof. XV.

THIS is justly inferred as to both the

parts: For,

I. IF, when we fuffer, we should take that to be the interest of Christ, which is not fo, we shall reap no advantage by what we lose or endure, because it's not for Christ, but for our own delusion and mistake that we fuffer; which is folly. On the other hand, if we are tried on any point, wherein the interest of Christ really confifteth, but we, by mistake, deny it to be so, and refuse to suffer for the profession of it, when called to adhere thereto; in that case we foolishly refuse that benefit which our Lord promifeth to his martyrs and confeffors, and expose ourselves to the punishments denounced against such as desert his cause. To fay, I was mistaken, will not excuse, when by prayer and faithful fearches, we might have known the will of Christ, and escaped that error: for the truth and reality of any part of the cause of Christ, depends not on man's judgment. Paul was a culpable opposer of Christ, tho' he verily thought be might do many things Acts xxvi. against his name.

2. It is also justly inferr'd, that we should be always ready to quit all for Christ

and his interest.

For it's very common to be convinced, that this or that point is the truth or con-

cern

SERM. cern of our Lord, for which we ought to XV. facrifice our all, and yet refuse to do it, because we have neglected to fix our resolutions, and prepare ourselves to part with whatever our adherence to Christ must cost us. Souls thus unprovided of suitable graces, are easily surprized to make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, and thereby come short of the advantages which they might reap by enduring tribulations and losses on Christ's account; he having

2 Tim. ii. fixed this rule for his distributions, If we see fuffer with him, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he will also deny us.

Upon the whole, if it be true wisdom to pursue our highest advantage, (which I have, in the former discourses, proved to consist in leaving all for Christ and his cause) it must be true wisdom to know the cause of Christ, and be prepared to leave all for it, seeing that both are absolutely necessary to our obtaining that advantage.

THESE two things being of such importance, I shall, in the name of our Lord Jesus, require all of you to comply with

these following exhortations.

I. LABOUR to become rightly instructed in what concerns the rights and interest of

the Lord Jesus.

This needs most care and fincerity, because it's often intricate; we are too apt to mistake, and many forward to seduce us; and their suggestions which tend to SERM. avoid sufferings, have a great advantage in XV.

our present state.

THIS matter is worthy of all our diligence and labour; for it's a great bleffing to understand what God would have us espouse, abet, and be zealous for. fmall honour and privilege to be poffeffed of the cause of Christ, and be of the number of those who bave the testimony of Je-Rev. xii. fus, and keep his commandments: for then 17. we are led by his Spirit, we keep in his way, we are on his fide against Satan, in that war which is waged between them; of which we are informed by those words of ? our Saviour, He that is not for me, is against Mat. xii. me. Again; when we have the cause of 30. Christ in our hands, we may expect his affiftance, and shall be inwardly satisfied that we are pleafing him, to whom we are indebted, and on whose favour we depend for all happiness. We are also carrying on his defigns in our day, which must appear glorious, and in due time prevail. Such things will give us peace and courage under all the hardships to which we can be exposed; faying, with the apostle, According to my earnest expectation and my Phil. i. bope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed; 20, 21. but that with all boldness, as always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death; for to me to live is Christ.

THAT

SERM. THAT I may affift you in discovering XV. the rights and interest of our Lord, so that you may not mistake in what ought to direct your practice, I shall,

I. SET down seven propositions as preliminaries.

II. I SHALL apply them to a question now depending, and of great consequence to us Diffenting Protestants.

## SECT. I.

I. I SHALL fet down seven propositions as preliminaries to the determination of the intended question.

Prop. 1. The Lord Jefus bath a cause in

this earth.

It is so, whether many understand it or not; it's so, tho' it lies near the hearts of sew. This ought to have place in the prayers of saints in all ages; as Pfal. lxxiv. 22. Plead the cause, which is thine own.

Our Lord having laid down his life for the redemption of mankind, according to that covenant, which adjusted the terms of Mat.xxviii the impetration of faving benefits, has all power given him. He sets up a kingdom more visibly mediatorial than before; and a gospel-state, with many institutions, bearing a peculiar respect to his authority and Eph. i.22. purposes as God-man Mediator: He is head

over all things to his church, for the gathering,

ing, managing, ruling, preserving, and im-SERM. proving the church, as his inheritance and XV. reward. Of him is that spoken, He shall Zech. vi. build the temple of the Lord, even he; and 12, 13. he shall bear the glory, and shall sit upon his throne, and be a priest upon his throne. His authority is incontestible, and his claim to honour and observance inviolable, in whatever beareth his royal stamp, or is appropriated to him in opposition to his rivals; or is any part of his intended conquest over the devil, the world, and the sless.

THEREFORE, whatever truth he commands men to believe, what laws he enacts to be observed, whatever discipline, ordinance, and office, he institutes, and what he reveals to be his purpose to effect by these, are his cause and interest on earth, whoever do oppose them. It's the concern of his dominion and honour, that these prevail; and before he delivers up his kingdom, he will put down whatever is contrary 1 Cor. xv. hereto.

Prop. 2. Every degree of reformation is fo far the cause of Christ; and this is abetted by all those who promote it in a proper way.

WHEN our Lord had afferted his authority, he requires his apostles to go and teach Mat.xxviii all nations, to observe all things what soever 20. he commanded them. He has appointed the rule, (the nature and perfection of it I shall speak of hereafter) an exact conformity to

SERM. it is required; every deviation from it is a XV. fault; the enacting any thing opposite to any part of this rule, is a challenge to the authority of Christ who appointed it, and a diminution of his honour. Therefore when attempts to reduce things to this true standard succeed, then his interest prevails; and they who use due means to effect this, their endeavours are laid out for what the Lord will acknowledge to be his own cause.

2 Chron.

As it's faid of Jehoshaphat, when he restored the worship of God, and took away the idolatrous groves, he brought the people back unto the Lord; so when the gospel institutions are corrupted in any degree, they who recover men from such defiling usages, do truly bring them back to the Lord. It's the same as to reformation in morals; for

Acts iii. one great defign of Christ is, to turn away 26. every man from his iniquity, and make them Tit ii. 14. zealous of all good works.

Prop. 3. The interest of Christ is contained, sometimes in greater and plainer things, sometimes in lesser and more obscure

things.

WHEN the apostle is erecting the kingdom of Christ among the pagan Gentiles, he first attempteth to bring them to know and worship the one living and true God, and to turn from idols, Acts xvii. 23—30. But he proceeds from what was revealed by natural light, to that which was revealed by inspiration, ver. 31. The like you find, 1 Thess. i. 9, 10.

Among AMONG the fews, who worshipped the SERM. true God, the first efforts of our Redeemer's XV. kingdom, consisted in bringing men to acknowledge him to be the Messias; this was the grand point debated among them; and the apostles apply themselves to the proof of this, as the great fundamental on which other things depended. When the Jews and others came to believe and receive this, the interest of our Lord prevailed as to this great fundamental.

But did the apostles think the cause of Christ extended no lower or farther, when this great article was gained? No, no; they zealously affert that Christ had an interest in matters of less moment, even in institutions opposite to the Mosaick rituals and oeconomy; and that it was as truly his cause, that these last should be laid aside, as that they should believe him to be the Messias; for when the judaizing christians were resolved to retain circumcision, the apostle tells them, If you be circumcised, Gal. v. 2. Christ shall prosit you nothing; q. d. your believing him to be the Christ, will not avail you to salvation, if you refuse that

christian institutions introduce.

The same apostle shews, that other usages and Jewish rites, as those about meats, new-moons, &c. were contrary to the interest of Christ, Col. ii. 16, 17, 20. yea, all vain deceits after the traditions of

liberty from the Mosaick yoke, which the

Vol. II. Dd men,

XV. mandments of men, are alike prejudicial to his cause, and the welfare of souls, Col. xvi. 8, 18, 22, 23. The black mark laid on them is, they are not after Christ; they are not according to his rule, and bear not the stamp of his authority; they correspond not with his designs, and serve not his purposes; they are unlike his spiritual institutions, and suit not his kingdom. Can any man imagine that the interest of Christ is not concerned in opposing these lesser things, when we see them thus branded by the Holy Ghost?

WHEN matters are comparatively small, they do not thereby cease to have a place in what our Lord now reckons to be his interest, any more than the removal of the less faulty groves and high places in Judah, ceased to be his concern. In some groves and high places idols were worshipped. There were also high places wherein the people facrificed unto the Lord God only.

2 Chron.

people facrificed unto the Lord God only. These latter were far more innocent than the former; and yet were so offensive to God, that Asa, Jehoshaphat, and many good kings who destroyed the idolatrous high places, are stigmatized with this defect, that they took not away those other high places; and Hezekiah and Josiah commended, as reformers more pleasing, faithful, and zealous for God, because they destroyed these as well as the others.

Prop. 4.

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Prop. 4. The servants of Christ are obli- SERM. ged to adhere to his interest in those very XV. things which may appear small in their own nature.

Their character and duty it is to fol-Rev. xiv. low the lamb where-ever he goes. They 4 Num. xiv. must, with Caleb, follow him fully, and 24 wholly. Whatever he adopts to be a part ch. xxxii. of his cause, is sufficiently great for them to espouse, and of too great moment to be neglected by them. Nothing of the concerns of the Redeemer should be despised as small, because his authority is great, all his affairs are wisely adjusted, and the least, conducive to great ends. Every pin in his temple is necessary, and designed for its proper use.

We may not know (nor is it fit we should) what use he will make, or the high purposes he intends to serve, by what seems to us of small account in itself. But we may easily judge, that adhering firmly to the least point, which Christ is advancing, is a means to prevent the opposite corruption, and will (if it be his time) proceed to surther steps in what promotes his king-

dom.

AGAIN; a faithful opposition to a lesser corruption, is the way to prevent greater desilements; whereas complying to admit of the least, is opening the way for greater, and for more in number. St. Paul judged it his duty to contend earnestly with St. Pe-

Dd2

SERM. ter, and others, when they forbear to eat XV. with the Gentiles, and thereby encouraged the judaizing christians in their separation from the Gentile converts, Gal. ii. 11, 13. Yea, he declares this liberty he strove for, to be the truth of the gospel; and however inconsiderable a point it seemed, he would

as would abridge him or others of any part of it, ver. 4, 5, 14.

ANTICHRISTIAN popery began in a violation of the laws and rights of our Lord in what appeared finall and inconfiderable in their own nature. These being neglected, gradually introduced abominable idolatries and usurpations, which polluted and enslaved the far greater part of the christian church. This had not been, if men had discharged their duty, by cleaving to the cause of Christ in those first encroachments.

not give place, no not for an bour, to fuch

Moreover, our Lord may fix on the smallest matters, as a trial of our obedience and sincerity towards him; nor can we be free from much guilt, if we are disloyal and unfaithful to him in the least matters. God denounced great punishments against his people Israel, if they dislobeyed or departed from those ceremonial injunctions, which had nothing in their own nature to commend them, or dissipance from them. But God took care to vindicate his own authority, for with him rebellion

rebellion is as the fin of witchcraft; though SERM. Saul thought the goods confecrated to a XV. holy purpose, and that they would have been wasted, if he had observed God's command, I Sam. xv. 23. Our redeemer puts his cause into the hands of his followers, he trusteth them whom he calls to be witnesses to him: he that will be false to Christ in a small matter, will betray his interest in a greater point, if tried. He that against his conscience will comply with superstition, will in great danger yield to idolatry; for his deferting the testimony of Christ in the one, argues that want of love, zeal, and devotedness to Christ, which will suffer him to deal treacherously in the other: and denying the authority of Christ, by offending in the leffer matter, he is so virtually guilty of all, as to be eafily induced to commit the greater, Jam. ii. 10.

Prop. 5. When, and where, any part of the cause of Christ becomes publickly contended against, and is attended with great consequences, that becomes the point by which be will have the fidelity of his servants tried

in that time and place.

THE Lord Jesus, in his contests with fatan, conquers by degrees, and is continually managing the war stated between both their kingdoms, by proceeding to take away more refined defilements and defects, after he has removed fuch as are more notoriously enormous. In like manner, after he

Dd3

SERM. he has made confiderable advances in the XV. greater and more manifest affairs of his kingdom, he introduceth what is further compleating, and perfecting of that purity

and order which his rules appoint.

On the other hand, the devil (with his acted auxiliaries) maintains the opposition as long as he can, is active to retrieve what he has lost; with vigor and craft attempting to overthrow what Christ has built up, or at least to obstruct those further advances of truth and purity, which are nearest to a full conformity to the laws of the Redeemer. And as his subtil suggestions, and what gratisties the various lusts of men, give him a great advantage; so he neglects not to use it, in disputing every inch of ground, in those several ways, as he thinks most accommodated to his purpose in every age and place.

A WISE observer of past times, may easily trace this *serpent's* attempts, sometimes by *errors*, and these often from one extreme to another; or descending to such as were less dangerous, when the greater doctrines prevailed; or new vamping such

old errors as were exploded.

SOMETIMES he has taken occasion from the ignorant devotedness of good people, or the wanton fancies of men less serious, to corrupt the worship of God by human inventions; or by the ambition of the powerful, further to usurp the rights and royal-ties

ties of our bleffed Lord, by imposing such SERM. things; and no wonder if by the blind zeal of fuch proud and carnal persons, he soon raised persecutions, filenced those faithful ministers who refisted such invasions on the prerogatives of Christ, to the ruin of his discipline, destruction of love, and the true christian oeconomy.

You may eafily infer, that there is in various times and places, a present truth; 2Pet.i.12. that is, a truth which Christ is then propagating in a special manner, and satan oppofing by the contrary error. In like manner, there are present corruptions, from which the faithful should be especial careful to keep their garments undefiled, as those Rev. iii. 4. few in Sardis did: So in various times and places, the Lord Jesus has several points of reformation to advance, and parts of his testimony to be attested.

WHEN any one of these is openly staged, generally, or by many, warmly contended, and attended with great consequences, to the great advantage or detriment of the church, as to its spiritual worship, peace, and the power of godliness; you may be then affured, that providence has fixed that matter, as the present point whereby the fervants of Christ shall be tried. And however inconfiderable the matter is in itself, the right fide of it is his cause, to which they must adhere as their great duty at prefent, whether it confift in promoting his Dd4 attempts

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SERM. attempts of further reformation, or oppo-XV. fing fatan's efforts to overthrow what Christ has gained. Nor will other uncontested matters, tho' greater in their own nature, give equal evidence of any man's loyal fubjection to the Lord Jesus.

> Prop. 6. The way to know what is truly the cause and interest of Christ, is a diligent study of his word, fervent prayer, and a

THE apostafy made that change in our

wife observation of providence.

state, that the light of nature is not fit to direct finners, in what concerns the worthip of God, man's recovery, and the Mcdiator's interests; therefore God, by inspired revelation, or other supernatural ways, has prescribed what worship he will accept, and what means he will bless to spiritual purposes. He thus, before the law, appointed facrifices, circumcifion, and a priesthood. When he erected in Israel a church, he gave them laws and ordinances concerning the most minute matters which referred to his worship and service, requiring an exact observation of his will in every parti-Deut. xii. cular, forbidding them to add or diminish any thing. The very tabernacle must be F.xod.xxv made after the pattern which God gave Moses. And of all utenfils, priests garments, &c. it's often repeated, they made them as God commanded Moses. manner, all after-changes, as to the temple and worship therein, were under God's

immediate

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8, 9.

Exod. xxviii.

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immediate directions to David and Solomon, SERM.

1 Chron. xxviii. 11, 12. and 2 Chron. viii. XV.

14. And when Hezekiah, Josiah, and others, set on the work of reformation, it was by the word of the Lord; and they bring things back to his pattern, 2 Chron. xxix.

17. and xxx. 16. 2 Kings xxiii. 3, 21, 24.

In the christian state there is equal need of supernatural revelations, as to the laws and ordinances relating to it; yea, there's more necessity, because the rights, claims, and ways of communicating benefits by the Mediator, as fuch, are more remote from the light of nature, and less fit to be adjusted by human skill. Our Lord Jesus has perfonally on earth, and more fully by his infpired apostles, recorded so much as, with what was written before, is sufficient to declare his will concerning these things, and that fo amply, as to be profitable for doctrine, 2Tim. iii. for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

HEREIN he declared what are the laws and institutions of his house, the terms of communion of saints, the manner and matter of worship, the nature, power, and qualifications of gospel-officers; what service he will accept, what means he will bless to saving ends; what are the articles of our faith, the nature of his kingdom, &c. and gave particular precepts concerning them.

SERM.

THERE are indeed fome general rules, as XV. that all be done to the glory of God; which requires our aiming at his glory in all acts of obedience, and regulating all our common and indifferent actions with the greatest tendency to his glory, upon an impartial weighing of all circumstances. But this rule does by no means allow men to invent, of their own heads, any part of divine worthip, or make any additions or alterations. that argue an imperfection in those particular rules which direct the matters that refer thereto; because this is so far from being to the glory of our Lord, that it highly reflects on his wisdom and goodness; on his wisdom, as if he knew not how to accommodate his rules perfectly to the glory of God, and the necessities and benefit of his church; on his goodness, that in matters so nearly relating to the edification and peace of his church, he could have made full provision, but would not. Moreover, it is dishonourable to him, as it equals mens authority with the authority of Christ, in that they make laws about the same matters, and to the same spiritual purposes, which his own laws are fufficient for. And their doing thus, in things about which he has forbidden all additions and changes, is not only to fet their posts by his posts, but far above them.

ANOTHER general rule you find, I Cor. xiv. 40. Let all things be done decently, and in order. This is to prevent shameful dis- SERM orders and confusions in the prophets ex- XV. ercise of their gifts in the church, and can require in other cases no more than that we perform all things with that comeliness and order, as that our doing otherwife would, by the light of nature, or warrantable custom, be judged unseemly and disorderly.

But this general rule must be fadly wrested by those who, to please their fancy, make orders, by which the institutions of our Saviour must be better regulated, more adorned, and more pompous; and thereby fo infult the particular rules he has enacted about the administration of his ordinances, that who foever administers or attends them exactly by those rules, he does it indecently, and in a disorderly manner. This is a bold impeachment also against Christ and his apostles, as acting unseemly and disorderly in the examples they give us; for their practice in these matters we take as a part of the rule, by which we act in these facred affairs.

IT must be yet stranger, that any should, by this rule of doing all things decently and in order, be warranted to require ridiculous, unfeemly, light usages, attended with confusion; and this in divine worship, which ought to be grave, sedate, solemn, spiritual, expressive of the exercise of inward graces, and a disposition for communion with the living God. Our

SERM.

3, 5.

OUR Lord Jesus was as faithful in his XV. bouse as Moses; which may affure us, that he has given fufficient directions about his worship, facraments, the qualifications of ministers, communion of saints, &c. by the particular rules contained in the precepts and examples recorded in the scriptures, or by clear confequences deduced thence. Therefore fearch and study those, pray

Tim.ii.7. that the Lord will give you understanding in all things which concern you, as directed by these: To the law and to the testimony appeal in all these cases, Isa. viii. 20. for you can do no more in faith, or as obediential acts in facred matters, than as you rest on the word for light. When the

church arrives to the height of these rules, it will be perfectly reformed; as far as it comes short, it is defective. Whatever is contrary to these, is rebellion; and when

wife men dare teach the fear (or worship) of God by the doctrines of men, he threatens Ifa. xxix.

13, 14. their wisdom shall perish.

To add to these rules, is an usurpation of the rights of our Lord, and fuch additions are profane and polluting; they make not worship acceptable, but provoking; they are fo far from rendring it more avail-Mat. xv. able, that Christ faith, In vain do they wor-Ship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. Whereas in following the rules of Christ, we may expect a bleffing to spiritual benefit, and acceptance with

him.

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him. In adhering to these, when contend- SERM. ed, we are faithful to his cause, who is too XV. jealous about sacred things, to leave to mens determination more than external circumstances, necessary and common to other natural actions; and not this neither, without such limits as make these subservient to the conveniency, and consist with the edification of such as worship him.

I MENTIONED a wife observation of providence as a help to know the interest of Christ. As to this, my time will allow me to say no more, than that it will be of use to us in this matter, to observe what providence appears to design effecting, what prophesies it is accomplishing, how it has influenced the minds of the most eminent saints as to the things disputed, how it has owned such, when they faithfully adhered to what they judged to be his interest; what effect one or other of these, or of things of the like nature, has had heretofore upon the vitals of religion, and what these are like to have for the suture, &c.

Prop. 7. When espousing and adhering to the present contended interest of Christ, is attended with sufferings, the best men have reason to be jealous, lest their judgment be prejudiced or biassed.

THERE's naturally in all men an averfion to suffering, which prompts them to wish they were not obliged to endure hardships, especially if severe. The flesh is altogether

SERM. gether an enemy to tribulation, and strives XV. to weaken the force of all those reasons which urge the necessity of losing honour, estates, places, ease, liberty, or life. It will find a thousand excuses, and offer numberless arguments against quitting such defirable things; fuch as, that the matter is too small to lay such a stress on it, it's an indifferent thing with many, all good men are not agreed in it; were it denying the Lord Jesus to be the Messias, or worshiping an idol, it would require the loss of these things; but at most it's but complying with what's a little less pure, a little more distant from the rule of the gospel, 83c.

As far as the flesh prevails, such reasonings will much affect, and appear stronger than plainer arguments on the other side, especially if God permit satan to manage them by his suggestions. There being remains of slesh in the holiest of you, it's meet that you be jealous of yourselves, and make allowance for the advantage which the corrupt part has to blind and deceive you.

THEREFORE pray earnestly, that God would direct and determine your judgment; Gal i. 16. Consult not with sless and blood; consider impartially the word of God, and by that decide concerning your duty. Judge as sedately as the importance of the matter requires; judge as impartially, as if you were judging

judging for another man: fee that you are SERM. upright in heart, for integrity will go far XV. to guide you; whereas a false heart will easily deny that to be the cause of Christ, 3. which exposeth to suffering.

FINALLY, when you are enquiring whether it be the cause of Christ, and that you are now called to suffer for it, have it on your mind, and decide it, when you are in the most heavenly frame, when grace is in the liveliest exercise, when your communion with Christ is nearest and most affecting, and your hearts relishing the hopes of eternal life, to a just contempt of this present world.

### SECT. II.

II. I SHALL apply some of these propofitions to a question now depending, and of great consequence to Dissenting Protestants. The question is,

Whether the members of Protestant Diffenting churches lawfully may altogether statedly desert our publick assemblies for worship, as a qualification to hold their present offices?

THE question might be farther extended, and determine concerning many others, besides the members of our churches.

BEFORE I fully state and explain the question, I shall consider the fubject of it,

SERM. viz. the members of Protestant Diffenting XV. churches. Their present relation to these churches, is a publick fignification that they are convinced and persuaded in their consciences, upon what they think just grounds, that the points in difference between us and the legally established church, are fuch, and so circumstantiated, as therein we are on the fide of the interest of Christ. and his cause is in our hands; and being fo long and publickly debated, and now attended with fuch confequences, they become the present trial of their fidelity to Christ and his interest; though the points in their own nature are not so essential as are many other points in religion.

WHEN they by their practice declare this to be their fettled judgment, they yet acknowledge the great piety and worth of many who differ from them in these matters, as thinking them too inconsiderable to bear that stress which we put on them. Nor do we think the faults, which we desire to be rectified, to be such, as to exclude those from being churches of Christ, who retain them; yea, we approve that our own members should testify their charity, by oc-

cafional communion with them.

IT would be censorious to doubt, whether pious good men, who are members of dissenting churches, are so upon principle of conscience? Many have testified, by their sufferings, that they are convinced the grounds

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grounds of their diffent are just, and that Serm. it's the cause of our blessed Lord to which XV. they adhere. I shall very briesly represent what they generally apprehend of these things. (1.) As to the nature of them. (2.) The circumstances and consequences of them as they fall under the former propositions.

(1.) As to the nature of them. They believe, according to Prop. 6. the sufficiency of the scriptures as a rule of faith and practice, and that Christ has given particular rules as to sacraments, with other acts of worship, the terms of communion of saints, the sorts, qualifications, and work of the officers of his church, and

the discipline thereof.

He has authorized no man to alter, take away, or add hereto, without divine revelation; there being the same or more reason to forbid such alterations in these, as in the statutes given to Israel about matters of the same nature, Deut. xii. 32. And what power Christ has given to any, as to such things, it is for edification therein by scripture-rule, and not to destruction. 2 Cor. xiii. But notwithstanding this, men assume to local alter and add to these things, in derogation of Christ's authority and wisdom.

WHAT we insist on is, that those things be conformed to scripture-rule, which are capable of being directed by that rule, and were designed by Christ to be so. We ac-

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SERM. count the changes and additions to be fuch. XV. that upon the fame grounds as these are imposed, (though called indifferent) all ministers qualified as Christ appoints, may be incapable to be ministers, or act as such; and all faints qualified for communion of faints, to the full of what Christ requires, may be made incapable of communion of faints: for many things of the same kind may be added, as warrantably as a few; and what are enjoined, minister such ground of scruple, as may very possibly be generally fcrupled by others, as well as by us.

I SHALL hint only at a few: Some ceremonies (as the cross) are made so significant and akin to facraments, that they who deny them to be facraments, have no good reason to deny it, but that Christ did not institute them, tho' used to the same spiritual purposes. Again; such persons as are neither the parents nor proprietors of the infants, are required to dedicate them to God, personate them in the baptismal vows, and to claim the covenant bleffings for them; whereas it's only the believing parent or proprietor, to whom God has affured fuch bleffings for their infants, or given a right to dedicate or put them under the obligation of fuch vows.

In addition to the hint above concerning ceremonies, it's observable, that several ceremonies of the same facred fignificancy were observed in the church of Israel, but

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God entrusted none of them to man's di- SERM. rection. Our Lord removed those, and XV. made a freedom from them a part of that christian liberty, wherein we are commanded Gal. vi. 1. to fland fast. Have we not reason to infer. that if Christ had thought such ceremonies fuited to the spiritual and rational nature of his kingdom, he would not have abrogated those which were of divine original, to make room for fuch as are invented by men? Or is it probable, that if Christ had judged rites of the same fort fit for the christian church, he had not himself appointed them, and not left them to the judgment and choice of fallible men, naturally apt, and often tempted to mistake, to exceed, and to be more zealous for their own inventions, than the institutions of

Ir those things mentioned, Col. ii. 16, 27. about days, new moons, sabbaths, meats, &c. are the Mosaic institutions, and shadows of gospel-mysteries, (as many think) they are forbidden, because the body is of Christ; i. e. he introduced, possesset, and dispenseth the substance opposed to these shadows; the very same is as strong an argument against the like shadows after his coming as before; for the body is of him now in greater evidence.

our bleffed Lord?

If (as others think) those shadows were such as the Jews; or (as others think) they who were christians, invented of their own

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heads,

SERM. heads, that text does expresly condemn XV. them, and all fuch representing inventions.

As to a godly discipline, the want of it in the church is still acknowledged in the liturgy, and owned as what is much to be

wished.

Ministers, as a qualification for their office, are enjoined to fivear and subscribe what the most conscientious persons, who fubmit thereto, are forced, for the quiet of their consciences, to interpret contrary to the literal sense.

MANY things might be added, but my design is only to hint at a few of those, which Diffenters cannot think fo indifferent, as not to believe that they ferve the interest of Christ by differing from them,

as Prop. 1, 2, 3.

Is not his authority, honour, the purity of his worship, and the spiritual benefit of his church, what we labour and bear our testimony for herein? Had the church from the apostles days kept to the scripture-rule in fuch matters, many mischiefs had been prevented, especially the rise of the papal man of fin. Nor are these things the less, but the more culpable, by his abuse of them, and their conduciveness to the return of his dominion in any place. But we have this comfort, that upon his ruin the temple shall be measured, and all such corruptions shall cease by our Lord's (the true head of the church) bringing all things in

time

in his church to his own pattern, which is SERM. predicted in the eight last chapters of Eze- XV. kiel, and chap. xx. xxi. of the Revelations; then, as Ezra xliv. 24. they shall keep my laws and statutes in all my assemblies.

(2.) THE Diffenters apprehend these things to be fo publickly and long contended, and attended with fuch great confequences, that they both scruple them on that account, and reckon a diffent from them to be their adherence to the cause of Christ in that point, wherein he at present trieth their fidelity to him, as Prop. 4, 5.

A FULL conformity to all the laws of Christ, is at all times a duty, and the least deviation a fault; but the same stress is not at all times to be laid on every point of duty, as it stands in opposing what contradicts his rules, or promoting of a compliance with them. For it has not always the same subserviency to that design, which Christ is effecting; the same degree of light about it, is not darted into the minds of his fervants; the evil opposed is not always alike dangerous, and struggled for; or more effential matters are to be almost wholly attended to; as when far greater abuses are removing, and some very essential part of the christian constitution to be fet up. In fuch cases, things more minute and doubtful, are not fo discriminating; nor are the contraries that part of the interest of the Redeemer, which is at that Ee 3

SERM. time to be profecuted with the same zeal, XV. as the greater matters then depending.

WE find the apostles overlooked the jewish rites, while the point at present contested with the Jews was, whether Jesus our Redeemer was the Messiah? But when that truth was received by them, and the judaising christians contended for those rites as necessary, and to be imposed on the Gentile christians, the apostle Paul engageth with zeal against them, and contends for their removal, as a sacred part of the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In like manner, at the beginning of the Reformation, the viler and idolatrous corruptions of popery were the great subject of trial; and these lesser matters debated by few, (tho' by fome of the best men even in king Edward's days.) They esteemed it a great mercy to introduce what was contrary to those horrid papal abominations, and as much as they thought possible to gain at that time among a clergy and people so very corrupt and superstitious. it was foon found, those churches were most happy, who most fully reformed at first; for they, whom God spiriteth for the work of reformation, are too oft followed by others, much apter to relapfe, than to proceed in what is well begun.

In queen Elizabeth's reign, conformity was disapproved by great numbers, but not urged for many years, nor attended with

the same evil effects as after 1588. Many SERM. bishops, a house of commons, a convocation, and several prime statesmen, interposed for the ease of Dissenters; but by a fondness of pomp and forms above a preaching ministry, all their attempts proved unsuccessful. Those impositions and severities increased still more in the two following

reigns.

ALL men know what defigns were laid in the reign of king Charles II. and how much a further heap of impositions were conducive to bring about those unhappy purposes, (if popery and flavery by profaneness deserve that epithet.) But tho' these were, by a fignal providence, restrained in that reign, and by a miracle defeated (as we thought) when just upon accomplishment, in the reign of king James II. yet no endeavours of the glorious instrument of our deliverance, no methods adjusted by wife and moderate bishops, no calamities attending a tedious war, (when union is fo necessary) no danger of popery, however great, are able to this day to abate these human impositions.

Thus for near two hundred years they have divided the nation, and caused warm and publick contests. The consequences of these impositions are to be lamented; for many thousands of faithful ministers have been silenced from time to time; love among christians destroyed by mutual cen-

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fure:

SERM. fure; many violent persecutions against XV. multitudes, for no pretended crime except nonconformity; foundations shaken; civil rights hazarded; much time and pains employed about the defence of these inventions, which had otherwise been laid out to the real benefit of fouls. From these our popish enemies have been oft (and still are) encouraged to attempt, and hope the restoration of popery. It's too notorious. that very many place the most of their religion, and hopes of eternal life, in their observance of these, tho' they remain ignorant and regardless of the effentials of christianity. By these the most wicked and profane come to be necessitated to receive the facrament, and obtain opportunity, and gain a handle to asperse and abuse men who appear truly godly, yea, holiness itself fo far, that the most godly persons of their own communion are by them branded with the name of Presbyterians, (a title with them more odious than that of Papists.) How many persons fit to serve the government, are render'd useless and incapable? These are some of the fruits of our impofitions; and yet the impofers acknowledge, that they are but small things, indifferent matters, no part of worship, not necessary to falvation, and what the church may alter: Whereas we, on the other fide, can't without finning against the dictates of our consciences, comply with or declare for them; them; and are perfuaded we cannot be SERM. faithful to the interest of Christ Jesus, un- XV. less we in our stations endeavour a reformation of fuch terms of the gospel-miniftry and communion of faints, as he never appointed, and both are and will be still attended with fuch pernicious confequences, and yet are so unapt and unnecessary to any better purposes; that a christian church upon fewer fuch experiments should be possessed of charity enough to remove them long fince, tho' our fcruples had been but the infirmities of weak brethren. Nay, was Rom. xv. it ever known, that even civil governments, 1. only to shew their power to impose, continued what they found fo long useless and hurtful?

How useful our dissent has been to keep up the power of religion, and excite diligence even in the publick ministry, I leave to the judgment of wise observers. Nor is it necessary to spend words to prove, that such of our people as are convinced that we ministers are pleading the cause of Christ Jesus, ought not to desert us, but to support our testimony in what concerneth ministerial as well as lay conformity.

I HAD not treated at all of these matters, if the following case could have been resolved, without supposing that the members of dissenting churches are persuaded, that a reformation of the matters in debate at present, when attended with such con-

fequences,

SERM. sequences, is the cause of Christ, and XV. what is implied in their relation to separate churches.

II. I PROCEED to state the question,

1. Negatively. 'Tis not, 1. Whether Diffenters may have occasional communion with the established church? This I grant, though its more doubtful than heretofore. Nor, 2. Whether Dissenters may do much service in offices of trust, and should not without just reasons quit that capacity for usefulness? This I affirm, and wish all offices were filled with men best qualified, of whatever denomination.

2. Affirmatively. The question is, whether the members of Protestant Differing churches in office, may altogether statedly forsake our publick assemblies for worship, to become qualified to continue in their

offices?

This I deny, and am fully persuaded it's the will of Christ they should quit their offices, and adhere to our publick assemblies where they have opportunity.

I SHALL offer some reasons, why they may not statedly absent from our publick assemblies, to become qualified to keep

their offices.

R. 1. It's against the nature of that christian profession which the word of God injoineth.

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We are not only to hold fast the faith SERM. in our hearts, but we must hold fast the XV. prosession of faith without wavering, i. e. Heb.x.23. We must do nothing that appears a disowning of any article of faith, or of any thing by which an unseigned faith is to be instanced. And we must also openly avow these, when we have a just call and sit opportunity to do so. What is opposite to either of these, is a disowning the faith, and rejecting the prosession of it. As it is a wickedness to deny Christ, so he reckons it an abomination to be ashamed Luke ix. of him and his words, i. e. so as not to avow them.

Obj. WE shall profess the fame faith, and words of Christ, tho' we forsake the

diffenting affemblies.

sol. You will profess them in part, but not to the full extent. You'll profess them in what's not contended, but you'll disown them in Christ's present contended point. For if the word of our blessed Lord require our dissent, his interest then is concerned in our assemblies; and you cannot profess an adherence to that part of his interest, if you forsake our assemblies. For the apostle declares the desertion of their assemblies to be inconsistent with a right profession; and that their presence in those assemblies, was to be an instance of their profession, Hold fast the profession Heb. x. of faith, &c. not forsaking the assembling 23, 24.

SERM. of your selves together, as the manner of XV. some is. Now can any imagine, that the private meeting of nine must not be a very defective profession, in a place where publick assemblies are held? (But of this hereafter.) Such a practice (as far as evident) is a professing that Christ has not an interest in such deserted congregations, to which you stand related.

WHEN Darius signed a decree, that whosoever shall ask any petition of any god or man, save of himself, should be cast into the den of lions; Daniel did not shut his windows, or alter his custom; but thought it a matter of conscience, to venture office and life too, rather than let his enemies want evidence, that no decree should restrain him from daily praying to his God, Dan. vi. 7, 9, 10.

R. 2. It's a deserting of those persons, whom God requireth you to own and ad-

bere to.

2 Tim. i. We find it expressly charged, Be not ashamed of the testimony of Christ, nor of me
bis prisoner. Which informs us, that when
some are eminently exposed for the testimony of Christ, it's a fault in others to
carry towards them, as if ashamed to own
them. It's the character of persevering believ-

Heb.x.33. ers, They were companions of such as endured reproach, and were a gazing-stock for the truth. And Onesipherus is highly praised

z Tim. i. for this, He was not ashamed of my chain; but

but on the contrary, Demas is condemned SERM. for for faking of St. Paul, from a love of XV. this present world. And they of Asia fell under dangerous guilt, by not standing by 10. him in his trial, ver. 16.

To apply this to our case. Such of you as shall now forfake our publick affemblies, do refuse to share in the reproach of our incapacity for publick offices; for you defert them to continue your publick employment, in a time when none who are present in them, are allowed to be in any office. Must you not appear to disown us, as not affembling to maintain and promote the cause of Christ at this time; or else as unworthy to bear any office; or at best you declare, that if all we Diffenters were in office, then all these publick affemblies must cease, and be reduced to the number of nine persons at most, (besides the family.) For why may not all fuch do the fame as well as you? But as the last would make all our affemblies for worship contemptible, and unfit to answer many of the purposes for which Christian assemblies were instituted; so to disown us as incapacitated for offices by our being Dissenters, and yet continuing in our publick affemblies, is to disown us as having the cause of Christ in our hands, and as fuffering for it too; which cause you have long professed to be the sentiments of your conscience, yea, may not I fay

SERM. I fay, you can't always oppose, or easily XV, renounce those sentiments, whilst you act from principle, and not from fecular interests. Moreover, by absenting from our affemblies, you withhold from them, whatever reputation, fafety, strength and affistance your presence would afford. It concerns you to ponder how this will be accounted for, which in the country is like to be destructive to most of their meetings.

R. 3. Your defertion is directly contrary to the rules, by which our Lord Jefus has

appointed his churches to walk.

IT's the appointment of Christ, that all the members of the church meet together in one place, rich and poor, I Cor. xi. 18, 32. An Eraftus is not exempted (tho' he was chamberlain of Corinth, Rom. xvi. 23.) So I Cor. xiv. 23. If the whole church come Acts xv. together in one place. The whole church affembled with one accord.

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Object. Some of us will keep diffenting chaplains, or meet together to the number of nine, besides those of the family.

Sol. 1. This will reach to very few. They are not many who are able to keep chaplains; and how is it possible in country-places, and fmall corporations, to provide ministers for these several small meetings, when in most places they can scarce furnish a minister for the publick meeting?

Sol. 2.

Sol. 2. This might be better urged in Serm. a time of such persecution, as when there XV. were no opportunities for the church to meet in a more publick assembly. But,

Sol. 3. THAT's not the case at present, for there are places, where the churches, of which you are members, are allowed, and do meet together; and therefore you must altogether separate from the church in all its publick ordinances, or relinquish your office. As you are members of the church, you are by the rule of the Gospel obliged to meet in one place with the church, as you have opportunity; there you are to partake of the Lord's-Supper, and other publick ordinances. To neglect this is a plain breach of gospel-order, and must bring every church into confusion. pretend communion in affection only with a church to which you stand related, and omit local communion when you have opportunity for it, is an hypocritical pretext, and a vain plea for that separation, which is a great evil, unless cause be given for it on the part of the church to which you belong. This one reason is sufficient, were there no other, to determine the case as to church members.

R. 4. It's an approbation of what reflects on the communion of faints, which ought to be regarded as a great article of the Christian faith.

SERM. IF you retain your offices upon the pre-XV. fent terms, you declare against communion with all of us in any of our affemblies. You must have no communion with the French, or Dutch churches among us, who use not the national liturgy. Is it in vain for them and us to fay, We are reformed churches as to faith and worship, and yet you renounce communion with us, as if we were heretical and idolatrous, and justly branded as incapable, not only of publick trust, but of your Christian fellowship in

all publick ordinances?

IT is indeed strange, that Pagans allowed those men to be in offices, who acted according to their consciences, tho' very contrary to the national establish'd worship, and usages. Daniel was chief of the prefidents; Nehemiah, Mordecai, and others were great officers at court; Cornelius and others were officers in the army; Erastus the chamberlain of the city of Corinth; and yet among protestants, we must be made incapable of any of those offices, tho' we subscribe the same articles of the Christian faith, and differ in nothing truly protestant.

But it will be yet stranger, that any Diffenting protestants, especially such as have found the presence of God with us, and are feals to our ministry, that these, I fay, by retaining their offices on the enacted terms, shou'd comply to renounce

communion

communion with us, and fo far approve SERM. of fuch narrow inclosures, as leave so re-XV. proachful a mark on the most reformed churches; if the scriptures be allowed the standard. Lord! where will this end? Is this the unity, charity, and fellowship so oft recommended by the Spirit of God, Epb. iv. 2, 3, 4, &c.

R. 5. It condemns all who suffered for the Dissenting cause, and for keeping up their

assemblies in times of persecution.

THE apostle blames them as faulty, who added afflictions to his bonds. If your Phil i. 16. owning this cause which you have so long professed, and if your peaceable enjoyment of these assemblies be not worth laying down an office; you declare them fools, who to transmit the first, and procure the last, endured fines, imprisonment, reproach, and spoiling of goods, ruining of their families, loss of profitable places and preferments, yea, and some their lives too. But I must tell you, they gloried in what they suffered, they had joy and peace of conkience in their dying hours, and thankfully acknowledged the grace of God, whereby they were supported to endure all their hardships for what they esteem'd lo good a cause. Nor have we any reason to esteem this cause of Christ the worse, because deserted in a time of degeneracy, and decay of the power of religion; yea, I am fure, it will revive, as holy tender-VOL. II. ness,

SERM. ness and vital religion recover in these na-XV. tions, and the true interest of the Redeemer gaineth place in the hearts of men. In the mean time, what guilt and ground of suture terror do the degenerate offspring of these faithful sufferers contract, who to prevent suspicion, despise their ancestors, and exceed the vilest in malignity?

R. 6. This can't be without giving great

offence and scandal.

THE word of God plainly forbids this, 1 Cor. x. Give none offence, neither to Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God. It is offence given, for it's doing what's not your duty, by either precept or approved example in the word, and you can't but foresee it will lead many to fin. are likely to imitate your example against the dictates of their consciences. Many in the country, who cannot find ways for those seperate meetings of nine, (by which you palliate the matter) will be led by your compliance to cast off all that feems any adherence to his interest; it will fortify the charge of hypocrify, which the cenforious wickedly imputed to you heretofore. These called you hypocrites, because you occasionally communicated, as they faid, only for a place. To this you justly pleaded, it was not fo, for you only put in practice a principle received and practifed by the most eminent Diffenters, before the facramental test was enacted; and you being of the fame

fame judgment, had no reason to resuse to SERM. act according to your known judgment, XV. when it made you capable to serve your

country.

But now you will have no fuch pleas: Can you pretend, that it was ever the principle of any Diffenter, that men may ftatedly forfake the publick affemblies of Diffenters to keep an office? Or did any besides deserters ever do so? Therefore you tempt them to fix the charge of hypocrify on you, though they know not your hearts.

It's well if they be not further tempted to make political tests, which may keep out of office all fuch as feem to favour Diffenters in their hearts, (though for the fake of civil liberties;) for seeing this is not sufficient to keep out all those as would still appear Dissenters, (whom many resolve to exclude one way or other) fuch will be apt to endeavour another test. Nay, I wish they be not tempted to revive old severities against our publick meetings; for when they fee leading Diffenters defert them to get or keep a place, they'll be apt to think, that their severities were unsuccessful formerly, because there was more religious strictness among us; but that they may now fucceed, when Diffenters are become so lukewarm and indifferent in the matters of God, and interests of our Lord Jesus. Again, will not your forfaking our affemblies encourage many of our people to fet up SERM. up private separate meetings, though they XV. have no offices, when they see you keep your meetings, if it be without publick reproof.

I WILL pass by the grief it may cause to your ministers and fellow members, when thus despised and deserted; though this should make some impression on men of

charity and tenderness.

It's worthy our notice, though I will not pretend to draw a positive reason from what's fo obscure, as is the furprizing uncommon way, by which this trial comes upon Dissenters in office. A dismission from all places of publick trust is unanimoully given, by both parties, (whatever different views they had) nor can I doubt, that the first springs of this affair at present were moved by better purposes, than the nature of it imports, and not from fuch ill defigns against us, as many may suggest. However that be, I can't but think fo uncommon a providence has fome answerable purpose to serve by it, and loudly speaks to us as a discriminated body. Without any doubt, it calls us to be humbled, try our ways, and to repent of whatever may forfeit or unfit us for publick trust in God's account; it compels us also to be wifer and more united, and requires our charitable affistance to such, as shall by the loss of their places become unable to subsist their families.

I DARE not pretend to any positiveness SERM. as to the farther reaches of this providence. XV. It may be for our fafety; it may be God intends for some time to confine our activity more to what concerns the improvement of our liberty to spiritual purposes, waiting for farther light in accomplishment of Zech. xiv. 7. At evening-time it shall be light. I remember the voice in Jerusalem (go to Pella) was obeyed by the christians, and proved the means of their fecurity. when they in the city fought against each other, as foon as the Romans intermitted their affaults. And the apostle has respect to the desolations, that came upon that people by the Roman armies, in Heb. x. 25. Not for saking the affembling your selves together, as the manner of some is, but exborting one another, and fo much the more, as you see the day approaching. Whence you may infer pertinently to the question before us, that upon the approaches of publick calamities, professors, instead of forfaking the affemblies and edifying conversation of their brethren, ought to attend them more and more.

Finally, men may be outcasts, with a promise of much good, instead of incuring any damage: Hear the word of the Isa. Ixvi. Lord, ye that tremble at his word: your 5,7,8,9. brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let God be glorified; but he shall appear to your joy, and Ff 2 they

XV. verses tell you, it's as fignally and suddenly, as if a nation were born at once.

Obj. If we refign our office, we lose an opportunity for fervice.

Sol. I. God may fill up your places ano-

ther way.

2. However, God requires no service from you, nor will accept, nor usually succeed it, when undertaken on finful terms; and he forbids you to do evil, that good

may come of it.

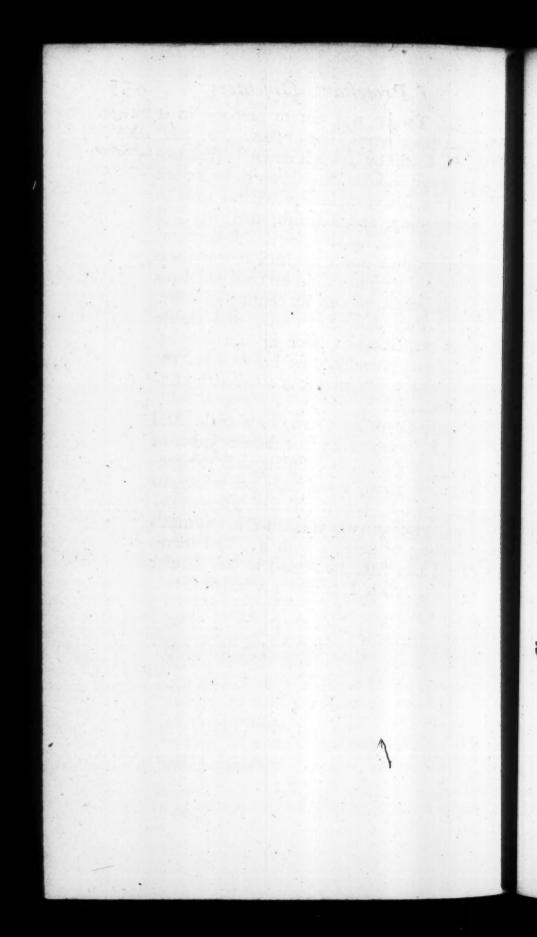
3. I APPEAL to every unbiassed awakened conscience, whether you are obliged to continue the little fervice you can perform in your office, when it must be by renouncing your profession, deserting those who are subserving the interest of Christ, violating the gospel-rule, (whereby churchmembers are to affemble together with the church in one place) approving what's destructive to the communion of saints, condemning all those who suffered for the Diffenting cause and assemblies, giving an occasion of offence to many, and difregarding the voice of the present surprizing providence, which may intend your fafety and benefit. I am persuaded no man's service among us can be justified against the force of these reasons.

Obj. WE came into our office by a special providence.

Sol.

sol. That was not to continue in it Serm. upon these terms, but to shew your side-XV. lity to Christ by laying it down. This ungodly age reckons all religion to be a trick or mere fancy, and all pretenders to it to be designing, and so selfish, that they will suffer nor lose nothing for it. It concerns all pious men not to confirm any in these atheistical notions; God oft confuted them by his people voluntarily chusing to suffer, rather than desert his cause, and violate their consciences. Such an occasion has this signal providence set before you; the Lord grant you may not abuse it by unfaithfulness.

I HAVE delivered my own foul: And fince it was necessary that some or other of us should guard our people against the prefent temptation, I was the more willing to undertake it, because it's known that my subsistence is no way concerned in any men's forsaking or abiding with us; and therefore I can have no regard to any secular interest, when I declare my judgment.



#### 

A

### FUNERAL-SERMON

Upon occasion of the

## DEATH

Of the REVEREND

### Mr. MATTHEW HENRY.

Preach'd at Hackney, June 27. 1714.



A

## UNERAL-SERMON

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Of the Kayanana

### MATTHEW HENRY.

Willet Hober, Jane 27, 1714. E



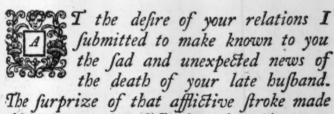
TO

### Mrs. H E N R T,

Late WIFE of the Reverend

# Mr. HENRY.

MADAM,



this to me a very difficult undertaking.

On the following day you were pleased, by several worthy gentlemen of Hackney, to request that I would preach there a funeral sermon on the next day; the honour I had for the Dead, and for you his Reliet, conquered my backwardness to such a performance upon one day's warning. Your circumstances not admitting you to appear so soon in publick, I was willing to send you what I had delivered, with some additions of what I formerly preached on the same text. I heartily wish, that what I have said

said of the Deceased, may contribute to your comfort and conduct too. What I have collected from the text, will shew you not only your duty, but that the happiness of faints is secure under all the occurrences of life and death: The surest mercies are dispensed in both. You have a great charge upon you, viz. the education of many of the children of a father so near to God. But you have also much to encourage your endeavours; they are dedicated to God. The pains taken with the capable have well fucceeded, the rest are hopeful; many prayers for them are recorded in heaven; they are children of the covenant, and of one wellbeloved by God and good men. He has left many printed instructions for your assistance, which they will be apt to regard; and above all, you may, you ought, in all your good attempts, and, in every pressing difficulty, to look to and depend upon the Almighty God, as the husband of the widow, and father of the fatherless. May you find constant tokens of bis fulness, truth, and favour, and from him receive comforts by all your remaining mercies! I am

> Your fympathizing brother, and faithful fervant,

> > Daniel Williams.

### ROMANS xiv. 8.

For whether we live, we live to the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.



HE scope of this chapter is SERM. to maintain peace, and urge XVI. moderation among christians, notwithstanding their different fentiments and practices in ri-

tuals and other matters, wherein the effentials of faith and godliness were uncon-The text affigneth a convincing reason, why a charitable opinion of each other should obtain, altho' fuch differences remained; q. d. both parties are the Lord's in life and death, both parties live and die unto the Lord, and therefore they should neither despise nor censure one another; i. e. they are subject to the dominion and judgment of the Lord as their fole proprietor; they are also received and accepted by him as devoted faints, and as fuch they ferve him according to their different fentiments.

SERM. timents. It must then be unjust usurpation, XVI. and dangerous uncharitableness, to condemn fuch, because of some inequality in their degrees of light. But more of this afterwards.

### SECT. I.

Observ. I. Sincere believers are the Lord's

in life and in death.

JESUS CHRIST is the Lord; for ver. Q. it immediately follows, For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that be might be Lord both of the dead and living. Life here expresseth man's present state, and connotes all the time, endowments, abilities, interest, opportunities for improvements and fervice, with every talent poffessed by us in this life. Death puts a period to this present life by a separation of the foul from the body. Upon death the immortal foul passeth safely into the unseen state; which state is also referred to, because the interest of Christ in his faints is not interrupted by death, and his dominion is over the inhabitants of that world of spirits.

CHRIST is indeed Lord of all men, as truly as of believers: All being created for bim, and by him; they owe to him obedience in life, and must abide his judg-2 Cor. v. ment after death: All must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. But sincere christians are the Lord's in a more peculiar fenfe;

10.

fense; for they were assigned to him by SERM. the FATHER, Thine they were, and thou XIV. gavest them me. They are his by special redemption. He also apprehended them by Phil. iii. effectual calling, whereby they dedicated themselves to CHRIST, and by mutual covenant they farther became his own; They Ezek. xvi. are for him and not for another. Upon such accounts it's justly said to all believers, You are Christ's; nor is it a small part 1 Cor. iii. of their privilege, that they can say, I am can. vii. 3. my beloved's, and my beloved is mine.

Quest. WHAT's intended by a Christi-

an's being the Lord's in life.

Ans. 1. HE alone has authority to rule them, especially in what concerns religion. His will ought to be a rule to them; whatever power others can claim over them must be subordinate to his, and by delegation from him. He is head of the church, to govern as well as influence his members. His propriety is of that fort as Eph. to be a foundation of fuch an absolute do- 23. minion, as admits no challenge or excuse. All his laws bind the conscience immediately; nor can any person dispence with, or authority controul them. Our Lord has referved to himself to appoint officers in his church, facraments, qualifications of ministers, and terms of communion, &c. To add to these, is to usurp his rights; to alter or refuse these, is rebellion against his crown and dignity.

SERM. Anf. 2. THEY are his to use and dispose XVI. of them whilst they live. Shall not he do what he will with his own? His justice and wisdom will preserve the rules of equity in disposing of them, and yet he is so true to his own rights, as to claim the disposal of all our circumstances and the appointing how our time and talents shall be employed. It's an unjust denial of his propriety to murmur at the work he ordains, be it never so mean or difficult. His title to his people is fuch as to ferve his purposes by their health or sickness, prosperous or low estate, higher or lower station; they are not to chuse or dispute. The interest of our LORD in us authoriseth him to effect his own ends by us, and by all that's ours, as his wisdom shall direct. Nor is this to be in some cases, but

Ans. 3. THE LORD is sure to be concerned for their good in all the occurrences of life.

in all; or at some certain times, but as long

as life endureth.

THE viciffitudes, wants and dangers in this present life are many. The LORD's people are exposed, in this world, to more distresses than others, because of their sidelity to him; but as their being his, brings on them the hatred of the wicked, so the same thing is their security and relief under all their troubles. He oft, on this account, restrains their enemies, saying, Touch

Pfal. cv.

not my anointed, and do my prophets no SERM. barm. They find cause to say, we who XVI. live are delivered unto death for Jesus's fake, That the life also of Jesus might be made 2 Cor. iv. manifest in our mortal bodies. He who faith 11. he is worse than an infidel, who provides not for his own, cannot neglect to provide for his own, the care of whom he has undertaken when they become his. They I Cor. ix. are not fent to war at their own charges. 10. His eye guides them in the way he orders them to go; by his strength they are enabled to perform what he enjoins. His confolations abound with their troubles. When weak, he carrieth his lambs in his Ifa.xl. 11. arms. When they go aftray, he brings them back as his own sheep; and will say, of them whom thou hast given me, I have Joh. xviii. lost none. Their whole life shall evidence 9. the truth of that place; He will be our Pf. xlviii. guide, even unto death.

Quest. II. WHAT is it to be the LORD's

in death, or dying?

Ans. I. THE time, and the manner of

a believer's death, are in his hand.

HE bas the keys of hell and death. His Rev. i. 18, faints shall not die when their enemies please, but when he thinks it most for his glory, best for his servants, and in the fittest time. The weakest shall live as long as he has work for them; and commonly they who have been very useful, are taken away before a longer life shall prove distributed. It. Gg honourable,

SERM. honourable, useless, or intolerable to them. XVI. It belongs also to him to prescribe, whether the death of his fervants shall be sudden or flow, eafy or painful, natural or violent, in youth or age, by what disease, and by what means they shall die, has ends worthy of himself in all its variety; and what's fo equal, as that those ends should be subserved by such as are his own? Peter had no cause of repining, when Christ signified to bim by what death he should glorify God, though it was to be a violent death: And he afferts his right to determine of fuch matters; when Peter asked, LORD, what shall this man do? i.e. Shall John, thy beloved, die as I must? John xxi. Christ replies, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou

19, 22. me.

Ans. 2. WHEN believers die, they are Rom. xiv. to appear before the judgment-feat of Christ.

HE alone has a right to judge them. By his fentence their state will be determined, and not by the censures of men; or their own mistaken opinion of themfelves. His own Gospel will be the rule of judgment; the great and convincing witness, will be his omniscient mind, to which the greatest fecrets of their hearts were known; viz. their good defires, refolves, contrivances, affections, and governing aims, these are better than what appeared oft in their actions and attainments. It's the fame all-

feeing,

Rom. iii.

feeing eye which observed those prayers, SERM. fasts, and charitable works, which they XVI. concealed from the world to avoid oftentation, and to approve themselves to him 4, 5, 18. as satisfied with his sole approbation.

Ans. 3. PRECIOUS in the sight of the Pfal. cvi. LORD, is the death of his faints.

HE who bottles their tears, cannot be prodigal of their blood, for it's precious in his Pf. lxxii. hight; it shall not be spilled but for valuable 14. ends; as to attest his truth, and be the feed of his church; and they shall pay dear who are guilty of shedding the least drop of it. So the cry of this brought utter ruin upon Rome Pagan; and, in revenge, shall Rome Papal have blood to drink, because she was drunk with the blood of the Rev. xvi. faints. She may shortly boast those wounds 6. are healed, which she received by the word of Christ's mouth; but she will, after a short triumph, find her plagues shall come in one Rev. xviii, day, and she be utterly burnt with fire; for 7, 8. strong is the Lord God who judgeth her, tho' the Protestants will be too much reduced

Ans. 4. WHEN dying, and when dead, he will deal with them as his own.

to effect it.

The sting of death he will take away 1 Cor. xv. by an affured pardon, and full absolution. 55. He sets them above its terrors, by a firm persuasion that he overcame death, to de-Heb. ii. liver them from the sear of it; and by 14, 15.

Gg 2 some

fick vision.

SERM. some forefight and foretastes of that good XVI. which follows their release. To render them meet for the upper world, their fouls shall be set free from all that's carnal and earthly, by their separation from the body, and the divine principle alone shall reign in all its faculties; his angels shall guide and Luke xvi. defend the departed fouls through the upper regions, till they arrive to the place of the blessed, where Christ will receive them to John xiv. himself, to possess the mansions he has prepared, and enjoy that perfect light, love, 2, 3. life, glory, and delights, which he purchased for, and becomes the members of Theff. iv. fuch a head. Them be will bring to appear with him in his glory, when he comes to-Rom. viii. judge the world! Their bodies shall his Spirit raife, as the bond of union betwixt him and them, which death could not dissolve; those bodies he will frame to that fpirituality, as shall fuit the heavenly regions, and the employment of exalted fouls. These bodies will not only be freed from all blemishes, pains, weakness, listleffness, Phil. ni. 27. and weariness, but made like unto Christ's glorious body; then their whole persons are folemnly absolved and vindicated, and Christ is glorified and admired in them; upon which they afcend, and will be ever with the Lord, to be perfectly happy in a full conformity to Christ, and in the beati-

EXHOR-

## the Rev. Mr. Henry.

## EXHORTATION.

SERM. XVI.

BE all of you persuaded to become the Lord's, by a fincere dedication of yourselves to him.

ACKNOWLEDGE that right he has to each of you. At the judgment-seat of Christ, every tongue Shall confess to God; Rom. xiv. i. e. to Chrift, who is God, unless Isa. xlv. 10, 11. 23. be spoke of some others besides the true God. If you are among those who are devoted to Christ, you will confess as they, ver. 24, 25. In the Lord we have righteousness and strength, in him we glory; but if unbelievers, you shall be ashamed that you were so incensed against him, as to deny to come and yield up yourselves to him: this you shall confess to be injustice towards him, and destructive to yourselves. He now puts in his claim, that by your consent you may become his for your own benefit. What have we to do with thee, Mat. viii. Jesus, thou Son of God? was what better 29. became the devils to fay, than you; for he invites you; your falvation depends on him entirely, and it's possible to be obtained for his fake; nay, it's certain to all who will yield up themselves to their bleffed Lord.

again, and revived, that he might be Lord 9.

of the dead and living.

SERM. He has not only a claim to you as your XVI. Creator, but as your Redeemer too. You are bought with a price, and that no less than his precious blood; to offer up your Rom. xii. felves to him, is your reasonable service: He might well expect, when bleeding on John xii, the cross, that he should draw all men to bim; for what enemies could be fo unconquered by his love, as rather die by their wounds, than come to him to be healed? He merited a propriety in you by his death; he is risen, and entereth his claim; he is alive, to observe how it's received, and has all power in heaven and earth, to avenge himself on such as reject him, as well as to confer all bleffings on those who accept his offer, by dedicating themselves to him, O bethink you whose are you, if you be not the Lord's; it's an usurper, even the devil, who possesseth you.

2d Motive. You comply not with the chief design of the gospel, unless you become the

Lord's.

THE gospel is an invitation of sinners to Christ; and all that's recorded therein tends to incline men to be the Lord's. What's historically declared of Christ, the account given of the Spirit's operations, the promises and threatnings, all concur to prevail with men to yield up themselves to him. What is mentioned of the evil of fin, the mifery of finners, the dangers, weakness, and emptiness of felf, the vanity of

of the world, the wiles and cruelty of de- Serm. vils; all this is to bring us to renounce these, XVI. as competitors with Christ for our affections and choice.

No minister can think his labours are effectual, till he can fay, I have espoused you 2 Cor. xi. to one husband, that I may present you a 2. chaste virgin to Christ. All the authority of the gospel, all its directions, all its allurements, encouragements and helps, are not only in vain to fuch as refuse to be the Lord's, but they will aggravate their condemnation, and expose them to the forer punishments. This Jesus will come in 2 Thes. 1. flaming fire, to take vengeance on them 8. who obey not the gospel. Flatter not yourfelves by any impressions the word has made upon you, or by the hopes you have gathered from it; for unless it has prevailed with you to give your hearty consent to be the Lord's, it has had no faving effects upon you. That is its chief intention, for that it is adapted, and its defign is not fully answered, till every thought 2 Cor. x. and imagination be brought to obedience to Christ.

3d Motive. To be the Lord's, includes the

bigbest bonour and felicity.

THE godly are pleased with the title of being his fervants, and oft mention it as their honour. But if you will be the Lord's, you shall not only be his servants, but his peculiar people, his friends and favourites, Rom. viii.

Gg 4 his 17.

SERM. his brethren, joint-heirs with him, his tem-XVI. ple, bis spouse, the members of his body, and bis beritage. Our Lord Jesus declares all these concerning every true believer: He fills up every relation to the extent of it: and must you not admire his condescending goodness, in inviting such as you into such relations? What honour, what fafety, what power, what riches, what happiness, must any one of these contain? What then must all of them together include? To be his. that is, to be his in all these respects, connotes a happiness not to be expressed by fewer terms. Look back to what I have faid of the Lord's concern for his in life: how precious their death is to him, and how he deals with them dying and dead; and will you not find cords fit to draw you to him, or enough to convince you what enemies you must be to yourselves, as well as to him, as long as it's your refolve, we will not come unto thee. I reserve another exhortation, as proper to the next head as well as to this.

> Observ. II. All true believers evidence their being the Lord's, by living and dying to him.

> This is the duty of every man, but it's the peculiar character of faints, they live and die to the Lord; it's the best and most undoubted evidence of their being the Lord's that they can give; nor will it be proved

proved by any thing without this. All SERM. faving acts suppose our being the Lord's, XVI. and are comprehended in living and dying to him.

SELF is excluded in both, ver. 7. None of us liveth to himfelf, no man dieth to himfelf. Self is the great rival with Christ, and therefore to deny ourselves, is made Mat. xvi. one of the first conditions of men's be-24-coming the disciples of Christ. Man by his apostacy set up carnal self as his chief end, and supreme ruler; his own humour, yea, his belly are to him his God. Therefore Phil. iii. till self be renounced, we cannot become 19-the Lord's, nor live or die to him.

Quest. 1. WHEREIN do believers live unto the Lord?

Ans. In general they live to the Lord, when throughout their lives they act for Christ and towards him, as they who are his in life. The course and tenor of their lives must express a true acknowledgement of his propriety in their persons and all their endowments; and this not by starts, but as the scope of their lives: not for a short time at first, but as long as life shall continue. St. Paul sums it up in these words, To me to live is Christ. More particularly,

I. THEY live and act in *subjection* to his authority as their Lord. You heard that the Lord has the supreme right to govern them; this believers confess by their obediential regards to him; they walk as he command-

SERM. eth them; and put away none of his sta-XIV. tutes from them. What he prohibits, they forbear; what he enjoineth, they account themselves obliged to perform, and to exercise sincere repentance, when they sail in either of these. Their solicitous enquiry is,

Acts xx. 6. Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? This they impartially study, with a fincere purpose to observe it against all the motions of their lusts, and without respect to their secular interests. His word they esteem a sufficient warrant, tho' many censure them; nor can the greatest powers make them forbear to do what the Lord enjoins, or comply with usages he has not warranted them to impose; for they are at a point, when

ther they shall obey the Almighty God, or feeble mortals. If men assume to prescribe rules in matters the Lord hath reserved to himself, they dare not follow them; but from a loyal regard to him, they reject all human inventions in the worship of God, and sacred ministrations of his house.

2. THEY live to his glory, as their great end.

THE glory of Christ is their governing end; this they propose in their undertake
Cor. viii. ings; they contrive and pursue the best means to exalt his name, and carefully avoid what would be a dishonour to him. So he be glorify'd by what they do, they are contented to want the praise of it, yea, to be despised; and therefore are most so
licitous

hicitous after confiderable performances, to SERM. observe whether Christ is exalted thereby, XVI. and not how they are applauded. As the Lord is greatest in their eye, so they contribute what they can to render him excellent in the esteem of others, and are grieved when any treat his name, his word,

or his image, with contempt.

To him they ascribe the praise of all their gifts and graces, and of all their benefits and bleffings: whenever they find any good effect of their labours, they humbly confess, that herein Christ has wrought Rom. xv. with me; and glory thro' Christ Jesus, in 17, 18. those things which pertain to God. Believers strive to be what they account the highest character a man is capable of, viz. The 2Cor. viii. glory of Christ. Not that they think they 22. can make him more glorious in himself, but they defire his own glory may shine forth in more illustrious instances; and that they may discern it as far as he is pleased to manifest it, and may discover it to others in all the ways he has appointed for that purpose; and among the rest, that his perfections may, as in a mirror, shine forth in their christian temper, labours, and behaviour. What pleasure was it to the apostle to be assured, Christ shall be Phil. i. 20. magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.

3. THEY serve his interest with faithfulness and diligence, as the chief business

SERM. of life. They impartially defire to know XVI. it; they heartily espouse it as a trust committed to them; it's just and honourable in their judgment, even when despised and condemned by the great and learned. This lies near their heart, as their great concern, whoever are unconcerned: they dare not deny or betray it, whatever hardships they are exposed to by their faithful adherence: nor will they neglect it even when the defence and propagation of it require the greatest application of mind, the hardest labours, the largest expence, the severest felf-denial, and very manifest peril of both lofing the best friends, and undergoing the wrath of the most powerful enemies. SUCH as are his, owe him all service:

23.

Acts xxvii. The angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, stood by me. Not to serve him at all times, and in all things, directly or indirectly, is defrauding him of his right: But tho' in all acts of obedience in every station, and doing what prepares us for his service, we are serving the Lord, and especially in all acts of religious worship; nevertheless an eminent part of this service confifts in being witnesses and agents for him in the world. If we neglect this, we live not to him, but to ourselves.

Col. iii. 24. Theff. XIX.

> THE interest of our Lord is too glorious to make us ashamed, afraid, or backward to promote it to our utmost; for the defign he is carrying on, and the purposes to

be

be served by us, are what become his wif- SERM. dom, holiness, and goodness; and they are XVI. conducive to the good of men, as well as glorious to himself. If you ask, What of this kind is it wherein you must be active? I answer, you must resist fin, and destroy the works of the devil, as far as your station admits; with all your might promote reformation of manners, the welfare of mankind, the purity of worship, a godly discipline, the conversion of sinners, the edification and comfort of faints, and peace among all fuch as call on the name of the Again; propagate the gospel for the knowledge of Christ, and the salvation of finners, and defend the faith of the gospel against popery and all damnable In a word, enlarge and advance the kingdom of our dear Lord to the extent of your ability.

4. THEY approve themselves to him, and study to please him from day to day. They are under the instuence of that rule, Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Col. iii. Lord, and not unto men. They appeal to 24 him for their sincerity when censured; they are satisfied with his approbation of what they perform, and are not free from doubts of the truth of their graces, till they can appeal to him, as St. Peter, Lord, thou John xxi. knowest all things; thou knowest that I love 17.

thee.

THE

SERM. THE same care they take to walk worthy XVI. of the Lord, unto all pleasing, they take to avoid what may grieve his Holy Spirit, Col. i. 10. who is their only comforter. They are ready to communicate to his necessitous ministers, and relieve his poor; for with Phil. iv. fuch sacrifices God is well pleased. Every 18. duty and good work they endeavour to Heb. xiii. perform acceptably to God, and to stand on good terms with him, whoever are dif-Heb. xii, pleased; as knowing, if they please men, they should not be the servants of Christ; 18. Gal. i. 10. for he justly claimeth, that our doctrine and actions should not be directed to be acceptable to men, further than as they please him, by a conformity to his declared will. And this is wisdom for ourselves,

> 5. THEY are well contented with his disposal of all the circumstances of life.

THEY refer themselves to him to chuse

for he hath the disposal of all that concerns

our welfare in both worlds.

their lot, and acquiesce fully in his determination, as perfuaded he knows what is best for them; and most conducive to his own bleffed purposes; to subserve which they are devoted, and every way obliged. They have learnt in every state to be con-What condition, work, and station, tent. he appoints, they submit to without repining, and labour to accommodate themfelves to it, so as to answer the ends of God in that disposition of their affairs. It

Phil. iv. 12.

is their care to improve the advantages, SERM. watch against the temptations, perform the XVI. duties, and exercise the graces proper and peculiar to that condition wherein they are placed. They dare not attempt a change of their station, but under his conduct; and are more folicitous to acquit themfelves well in a present mean condition, than to get it alter'd. If fickness, poverty, afflictive relations, or reproach, be their trial, by the hand of an unoffended God, every word of his supports them. If they are culpable acceffories, they fubmiffively accept their punishment, and rest not till a pardon frees them from guilt, which is the bitterest part of their exercise.

But the worst things they endure for the Lord's fake, they can glory and re-Rom. viii. joice in, as what will work for their good 26. 2 Cor. iv. in this life, and add an exceeding weight 17.

of glory in the life to come.

6. THEY labour to clear their interest in him, and to grow up into him, as the greatest end of life next to the glory of God.

All believers have a covenant-interest in Christ, but many of them doubt about it. They who have fome good hope, want a full affurance; they who have this, enjoy it not always. The most blessed comfort, next to a faving interest in Christ, is an uninterrupted full affurance of it. This they, who live to the Lord, strive to obtain,

SERM. tain, by an exact walk, eminent fervice, XVI. willingly fuffering for the cause of Christ, constant, intimate communion with God, growth in grace, and by the lively actings of Love to Christ, and of faith in him, and in the gospel constitution and promises. This is what Paul was so intent upon, to be found in Christ, and to win Christ. He had an interest in him, he had accounted all as loss for him; yea, he had attained affurance, for he rejoiced in him. What then he was still intent upon, and pursued, is either a constant affurance well established.

and more strengthned; or a farther growth into Christ, with a fuller conformity to

him, or both.

Col. i. 27. All believers are in Christ; Christ in them, by his Spirit and image, is the hope of glory. They are all new creatures, but some are weak, others stronger; all have fome degree of conformity to Christ; but fome have less of his image, Spirit, life, and power; others have more. But they who have most of these, are still pressing after further degrees: They forget the things Phil. iii. that are behind, and reach forth to those 15. things that are before. They would grow up into him in all things which is the head, even Christ; they propose no less than to come to a perfect man, unto the measure of Eph. iv. 13, 15. the stature of the fulness of Christ. For this they pray, and go from one ordinance to another. They endeavour to derive

more

more virtue from Christ; they desire the SERM. most transforming sight of him, that they XVI. may be changed from glory to glory. They thirst for such communications, as that 2 Cor. iii. they may find all of Christ's image in the whole of them.

Thus I have shewn what it is to live to the Lord: all believers do live thus in some measure; to come up to the sull of it, is our duty, and happiest are they who come nearest to this description.

Quest. 2. In what respect do believers die

to the Lord?

Ans. I. THEY are resigned to him as to the time and way of dying. They will wait till their change come, how bitter fo- Job xiv. ever their lives may be; and with Simeon, Luke ii. receive God's dismission and release before 29. they die: But when he fends the message of death, they receive it, whatever age they are of, and dare not fret at the manner or means by which God will have them die. How composedly does St. Peter speak of his approaching death, Know- 1 Pet. i. ing that shortly I must put off my taber- 14. nacle, even as the Lord Jesus has shewed me. Was this to be by an easy or natural death? no: Christ had shewed him, that he should be bound, and forced to die on John xxi. a cross, which was a shameful, painful 18. death.

Vol. II.

Hh

Ans.

SERM. Anf. 2. THEY willingly die for the XVI. Lord's name and cause, when he calls whem to it.

> EVERY believer is a martyr in purpose and resolution. The Lord is pleased to call fome out to refift unto blood, and facrifice their lives in the honour of his name: Such loved not their lives unto the death. Innumerable are the witnesses, whose blood was shed by heathen and popish idolaters; and still there remain many, who fay, in the strength of Christ, Neither bonds, nor afflictions, move me, neither count I my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my course with joy. A life is justly and profitably laid out by dying for Christ.

Ans. 3. THEY apply themselves to him as their judge, upon the approach of death.

WHEN we see death before our eyes,

we know we are near the judgment-feat of Christ (or what's equivalent) and the sentence we must expect from his mouth, which will determine our state for ever, for he is to be our judge. The favourable opinion, or rash censures of men, signify nothing; nay, our own apprehensions and fentence will not be decifive in this im-2 Cor. iv. portant case, but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Believers apply to him, that he would prepare them, that he would undertake their cause as their advocate, as well as judge; and that he would fo work in them, and so affift them to finish their courfe,

24.

Acts xx.

3, 4.

his Spirit, have ground to say, Henceforth XVI. there is laid up for me a crown of righteoufness, which the Lord the righteous judge 8. Tim. i.
spall give me at that day.

Ans. 4. THEY long for death, that they may go to him, and be for ever with him.

IT is not love to the world, nor a mere natural aversion to death, nor a fondness of a present life, that most hinder any true christian from saying, with Paul, I desire Phil. i. 23. to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better. No, it's a suspicion of their state, the awfulness of judgment and eternity, and the weakness of their faith, which do represent death as undefirable. If the Spirit of God set them right in all these things, death must appear amiable, for it opens the prison doors, and sets them in the way to behold the glory of their Lord, to whom they are so obliged; and enjoy him without interruption, to whom their hearts cleave with ardent love. As terrible as death is to nature, they can't but embrace it, as it lets them into the full poffeffion of all their Lord has purchased for them; the very hopes whereof yielded them more joy than all this world could give. Such things make them judge, that Phil.i. 21? to die is gain, and therefore to be coveted by them.

Ans. 5. THEY leave a good testimony for him, when their death is near.

Hh2

THEY

XVI. fervice done to him; they wish it had been greater. They regret not the heaviest suffering they had endured, but are thankful that they were enabled to bear it, esteem-

Phil. i. 29. ing it a benefit that was given them to suffer for him. They have such experiments of his conduct and affistance in distresses, they have found such constant instances of his faithfulness and power, that they can, without anxiety, pass into the endless state:

2. Tim. i. I know whom I have believed, and am perfunded that he is able to keep that which I

fuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day. Paul knew the importance of what he deposited in the hands of Christ, a foul capable of the greatest happiness or misery, and this to be determined in the day of death, and published at the judgment day: Nevertheless he was chearful, and his mind at quiet, on the very borders of eternity. But that none might accuse him of indiscretion, he tells you, the ground of his confidence was the acquaintance he had with Christ, by experiments, wherein any one besides this Lord had failed him; and so leaves it upon record, that the Lord had manifested his kindness, faithfulness, and truth to him, in the whole course of his warfare. He had fo discharged the trust he had committed to him from his first conversion, that he is not ashamed of his labours or sufferings, and has no doubt concerning him, as to what what concerned his perseverance in death, SERMand his welfare in the proceedings at judgment. I might instance in *Polycarp*, and many others, who left a glorious testimony for Christ as a good master, and fit to recommend his service to all survivors.

6. THEY believingly commit their departing fouls to him for their final happi-They stoned Stephen, calling upon Acts vii. God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my 59. spirit. He knew his intelligent rational part must subfist after death: this was the man, and though of dignity far superior to the body, yet it was incapable to conduct, defend, or adapt itself to that world of fpirits, upon which he was entring. He therefore puts himself into the hands of Jesus Christ, not doubting his willingness to receive him, or his fitness to discharge his undertaking. He was perfuaded, that if he received it, he would wash it from all its filth, supply all its wants, make up all Eph. vi. its defects, answer for all its faults, secure it against all its enemies, enlarge all its capacities, and replenish them to their utmost extent. Happy fouls thus lodged with him, who fully know that state, of which we are so ignorant, and who has the entire disposal of all that good which can make us happy there! He saves to the uttermost. Heb. vii.

Exhort. RESOLVE to live to the Lord, 25. and see that you maintain and exercise that resolution.

Hh3

THIS

SERM. 2 Cor. i.

THIS is your duty and your interest too: XVI. A life thus spent will yield comfortable reflections upon a death-bed: This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity, and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in this world. But fee that your purpose extend to all the fix particulars, in which I have described wherein believers live to the Lord.

But I must consider this duty with fome special respect to the context. you will find, that the Holy Ghost calleth you to live to the Lord; more particularly,

I. In a strict adherence to his rules in

the matters of religion.

2. In a christian behaviour towards his fervants who differ from you in leffer mat-

ters. Therefore,

I. LIVE to the Lord by a strict adherence to his rules in the matters of religion. It's his prerogative to appoint rules in this; for none but he knows what he will accept as worship, or what he will use as means, which shall be blessed by him to spiritual benefit; and he is most jealous in things of this kind.

WE find in this chapter the following

directions about this matter:

(1.) PLACE not religion in things indifferent, ver. 17. The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Men by not obeying obeying this rule, abridge themselves as to Serm. their spiritual liberty; they are tormented XVI. with scruples, spend their time and zeal about trisles which profit not, and neglect to mind what is accepted with God, and conducive to salvation. They who are hot for ceremonies, seldom mind the substance of religion.

(2.) SINCERELY endeavour to get thy confcience rightly instructed in the mind of God; pray, and study his word, to find out what he enjoins, and forbids, and what he allows as indifferent; ver. 14. I am perfuaded by the Lord Fesus, that there is no-

thing unclean of itself.

(3.) ADMIT no man to prescribe to thee in matters of religion, farther than they shew God's warrant. In this the Lord is thy only master, and thou art his servant only, and not the servant of any one on earth. Therefore, If thou keep a day, keep it to the Lord; and if thou keep it not, let thy sorbearance be, because he has not appointed thee to keep it, ver. 4, 6.

(4.) BE well perfuaded in thy own mind as to every thing thou accountest to be fin or duty; that thou apprehendest it to be so by divine direction; ver. 1. One believeth that he may eat all things, another eateth herbs. And, ver. 5. Let every man be fully perfuaded in his own mind; i. e. of the law-

fulness of it by God's word.

SERM. (5.) Be true to thy conscience, and do XVI. nothing doubtingly for the sake of any man; ver. 22, 23. He that doubteth, is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; for what is not of faith, is sin.

THESE comprehend much of that rule by which the apostle declares that he and others lived to the Lord. It's incumbent on you to follow their steps, for he is your Lord as well as theirs, and he will be your In this, therefore, be faithful; and judge. what matter is it who condemns you? for he is fure to justify you, and approve of your practice. Men may reproach, imprison, take away your estates, and lives too, for not obeying them, against this his declared will; but obedience to him will give you inward peace, and your Lord is fure to reward your fidelity with a hundred fold more in this life, than you can lose by it, and in the world to come eternal life. Loyalty to Christ, will be found more gainful than all the preferments you can get by willworship, and compliances with human inventions.

Mark x. 29, 30.

A DAY is near, when this Lord, whom you ferve, will publickly applaud you. He will fay, Well done, good and faithful fervants, who would not violate my laws, nor act against conscience to please the greatest, or to gain the pomp, the riches, or power, which your base compliance might have procured. It was to me you, my ministers, did

did live, when you refused such conditions SERM. of your ministry as I appointed not: To XVI. me you lived, in executing your office when rulers forbad you: I'll ratify your administrations, which the profane accused as nul-To all the faithful members of his churches, he will fay, To me you lived, when you adhered to my ministers, who were rejected because they durst not submit to finful terms; well done you, who concurr'd with them in attempts for reformation, and kept your garments clean in a time of common degeneracy and revolt. It was for me you became subject to calumnies, and branded as incapable of civil offices; for it was my cause you espoused, when you adhered to a pure worship, and refused to acknowledge that men had right to impose any terms of the communion of faints, which I had not appointed. His commendations may well encourage you to persevere, for they will be attended with a crown of glory, and ravishing pleasures for evermore.

2. Live to the Lord, by a christian be-baviour towards the servants of Christ who differ from you in lesser matters. The apostle distinguisheth christians here as strong and weak: The strong (elsewhere called 1 Cor. ii. Terretor) were such as understood their liberty 6. by the gospel, from the Mosaick ceremonies and rites: These were free to eat any wholsome food, and to omit the Jewish festivals,

SERM. festivals, ver. 2, 5. The weak were such XVI. as scrupled to eat slesh upon the principles of Pythagoras, or did forbear meats offered to idols. Many also of the Jews appreator viii. hended that Moses's laws, which prohibited some meats, and injoined the observation of certain days and months, were not abrogated. The strong despised the weak as ignorant, the weak judged the strong as profane and ungodly; both quarelled, and would force him, who differed, to comply with his own usages, and do as himself practised.

You find here many directions as to our

behaviour in this cafe.

(1.) Own fuch to be bis fervants, as appear so in the judgment of charity. He is thy brother, ver. 10. God bas received him whom you judge, yea, he shall be bolden up, ver. 4.

(2.) NEITHER despise nor judge those

that differ in fuch matters, ver. 3.

(3.) Do not offend or grieve them, much less impose on them a compliance with you against their consciences, ver. 13. But judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way, ver. 15. If thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably; destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. If we must forbear the use of our liberty in lawful things, lest the

2Cor. viii. of our liberty in lawful things, left the

good opinion they have of our goodness, SERM. or better judgment, induce them to act XVI. against their consciences, and so destroy themselves; surely the argument is much stronger against compelling them to do so by any penalties; as loss of place, or privileges, times, &c.

THE arguments are strong by which these directions are inforced, viz. Christ is our only Lord, and so allows no man to possess his throne, either to impose on conscience, or to judge men's state. To him they and you are accountable, ver. 4, 11. Again; it's from a dutiful regard to the Lord, that they are scrupulous, and act by their light, ver. 6. yea, the Lord may serve very good purposes by their different light and practice in those lower matters.

(4.) Follow the things that make for peace, and things wherewith we may edify one another, ver. 19. This would both restrain from hurting each other, and tend to common benefit. He is wifer than the apostle, that, under our present imperfections, expects an uniformity, by another rule than that, viz. Whereto we have attained, let us Phil. iii. walk by the same rule; and if in any thing 15, 16. ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal

even this to you.

SERM. XVI. ~

## SECT. II.

I SHALL, from the connection of the words, and to apply what I have faid of dying in the Lord, observe,

Observ. III. THEY who live to the Lord, shall die in the Lord, and be found

to be his for their endless felicity.

THOUGH, in the former observations. I began with the last clause, viz. living and dying we are the Lord's; yet the conjunction may import, that because we live and die to the Lord, we shall be the Lord's living and dying; and as we shall be his both living and dying, fo as we live to him, (which is what death depends on) we shall also die to him, as far as that expresseth our comfort and benefit by death. Of which I have spoken at large.

Exhort. 1. BE the Lord's in life, if you would be his at death. The state of men at death, is what it was at the end of life; accept therefore of his offers at pre-2 Cor. vi. fent, for now is the accepted time, now he invites and pleads; this is the time of espousals. If you reject him whilst this life continues, it's in vain to think you can ever be joined to the Lord. There will be no further overtures made, death will

will feal you up under an eternal fepara- SERM. tion from the Lord, other than as he will XVI. be thy judge, and an avenger of thy contemptuous refufals of him.

Exhort. 2. LIVE to the Lord, if you defire to die to the Lord, for your eternal

advantage.

ALL of you must die, it is appointed. Heb. ix. You shall die when, and where, and how 27. the Lord pleafeth, whether you confent or not. But would you find death unftung and friendly? would you have Christ receive your departing fouls, to fit them for, and admit them into, the heavenly mansions? would you find it a release from all that is grievous, and to be a joyful en- 2 Pet. i. trance into the everlasting kingdom of your 11. Saviour? then live unto the Lord. These are inseparably joined by the gospel constitution. O ask, then, to whom do you live, Is it to God or the devil? After what do you walk, Is it after the flesh or the Spirit? This is your feed-time: If you fow to the Spirit, you shall reap life everlasting: If you fow to the flesh, you shall of the flesh reap corruption. It's high time the youngest of you should begin to live to the Lord, for you may die in youth. It is truest wisdom in any of you, who have begun, to hold on to the end; for a life spent to the Lord, will, at death, end in happiness to yourselves, and great comfort THIS to your godly friends.

SERM. THIS may afford fome allay to our XVI. grief, when we reflect on the very afflictive occasion of our present meeting, viz. The death of the reverend, laborious, and useful Mr. Matthew Henry. I could not have chosen a fitter text, for it was eminently exemplified in him: Few ministers fo acknowledged Christ's propriety in them, much fewer arrived to an equal degree of activity in the Lord's fervice.

HE was the fon of two eminent faints. who were the glory of Christ in their day; and their character as eminently furvived in his life and temper, as in the account of their lives, which he published. they took more than ordinary pains in his education when young, fo they received the highest pleasure in his probity and usefulness in their aged years. Nor did God give a testimony to their pious care in making it fuccessful to him alone, but gave them the comfort of feeing all their grown children walking in their integrity.

God, to whom all his works are known from the beginning, often lays a foundation for the fervice he defigns, by fitting perfons from the womb, as to constitution and genius in great variety, as we fee in St. Paul, Luther, Melancton, &c. In like manner, having determined to do great things by our deceased brother, gave him a very strong body, without which his

labours

habours had wasted him in his youth. He SERM. also framed the organs of speech to the advantage of his publick performances; his fancy was lively, his memory retentive,

and his judgment folid.

SUCH a natural capacity rendred him capable of uncommon improvements; and being cultivated at home, and at the reverend Mr. Doolittle's, he foon fignaliz'd himfelf in all the useful parts of learning proper to his designed imployment, which was the ministry. Having finished those preparatory studies, and apprehending that the knowledge of the laws might contribute to more distinct conceptions of some subjects and terms in theology, he applied himself for some time to that study, and made use of that knowledge in several of his composures.

AFTER he had attained what he proposed to himself in the inns of court, he set himself towards entring upon the ministerial work, tho' in a time of persecution! He preserved this to all other employs, because (as himself often suggested) the work was more pleasant, the subject which still employed the mind more helpful to promote an heavenly life, and the power of religion in his own heart; it gave the best opportunity of serving Christ in his greatest designs on earth, and of benefiting mankind in what most concerned them, viz. the salvation of their souls.

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In order to his undertaking this work, SERM. XVI. he impartially studied the controversy beween the Established Church and the Disfenters, and, upon the maturest thoughts, he chose to be a Presbyterian minister; being fully persuaded the cause of Christ, in the matters debated, was in their hands; and for this, resolved to imbark with them. notwithstanding the reproach and hardships to which he might be exposed: for it was not earth, but heaven, to which he directed his course. Yet, with his nonconformity, he highly esteemed all pious conformists, and kept up a christian charity towards such as differed from him.

> UPON the evidence of his eminent gifts and graces, with a strong propension to discharge the duties, and promote the blessed ends of that sacred office, he was regularly invested in it by fasting and prayer, and the imposition of the hands of pres-

byters.

HE always accounted the work of the ministry the most honourable employment, and was to his death a fingular honour to it, by his unwearied diligence, and exemplary conversation. From his first undertaking the service of Christ in this function, the business of his life was, both to improve in meetness for it, and to fulfil the ministry he had received of the Lord. His prositing appeared to all, by being able, on the sud-

den, to perform so well upon any subject; SERMand thereby he commended the close study XVI.
of the scriptures; for the whole bible being fixed in his head (as well as heart) facilitated his work on all occasions. Can
the most invidious point to the man alive,
of whom it can be more justly said, He
laboured much in the Lord. If you consider how often he preached, you must
wonder how he could write so much: But
if you reckon how many books he printed,
could you imagine he preached so frequently? What time must be laid out in
the five volumes on the bible, besides many
other valuable books and printed sermons?

WHILST he continued pastor in Chester, which was two and twenty years, he filled up that station with service on Lord's-days and week-days. Besides this, he laid out himself in the adjacent counties, as one who had upon him the care of all the churches. How frequently did he preach

feven or eight times a week!

SINCE his transplanting to this place, he spent himself here, and in the city, as if his strength were miraculously supplied to do much, upon a foresight that his time was short. And of this he seemed to have some presages, when he assigned it as an apology to a godly person, who cautioned him against over-doing; and truly some such impulse, was the best reason he had to give.

VOL. II.

Ii

GREAT

SERM. GREAT was his acceptance, tho' his XVI. lot was to be in an age wherein the office is fo despised, that the same qualifications which commend all others, can fcarce preferve a minister from contempt. But providence peculiarly fmiled on our brother in this respect, though he neither courted applause, nor fought his worldly interest by flattery, or other unbecoming methods. What gave him esteem, were his integrity, affableness, the triumph of grace over his passions, forwardness to speak well of all, and evil of none, favoury discourses readily fitted to all occasions, useful and unwearied labours, and a readiness to serve all, with a pleasant acknowledgment of what endowments or fuccess any others were bleffed with. By these means the places were full where he was employed: perfons of all denominations greatly affected him, and his furprifing death is the subject of uni-

ALL must acknowledge the aptitude of his performances to common benefit; thus he studied, and accommodated his labours to persons of all ages; young ones he catechised in a way that exceedingly conduced to give light, and beget an affection for gospel-truths. Early religion he warmly pressed, and meltingly invited youth to close with Christ Jesus. Such as were converted, he laboured to improve to

higher

higher degrees of grace, and an exacter SERM. walking. For this end he published tracts, XVI. wherein most of the heads of practical religion are treated off with that judgment, as shews his acquaintance with the power of godliness, and the hearts of men. His words were decent, though familiar, and his proverbial fentences were contrived to affect, and retain in the memory some important truth. If it be objected, that he often made use of scripture phrases allufively, rather than in their proper sense; yet it must be granted, some pious things were ever gravely expressed by those words; and, I think, that from his being fo very conversant in scripture words, they first presented themselves to his mind, when the matter he treated of would be aptly expressed thereby.

WHETHER he prayed or preached, it was with such a fervour, as declared his heart was in it, and that he was employed therein from the vigorous actings of his

faith and love.

As he earnestly implored the presence of God for success, so, thro' his blessing, he found it granted in a signal manner. Many, very many, were converted and edified by his ministerial labours. These are now his crown.

This is the person whom God has taken away with a stroke, and so suddenly, as not

SERM. to allow us time to pray for his life. You XVI. can hear him no more, nor fee him any more, till the general assembly. He is cut off (at the age of fifty-two) when ripest for service.

NEED I call you to lament this loss? A loss fo great, that I can't aggravate it; fo extensive, that I scarce know where to begin or end. A tender wife has loft a faithful affectionate husband, filling up that relation to all good purposes; hopeful children deprived of the kindest of fathers; one concerned to fee Christ formed in them, and fitted to promote their welfare in every respect. You, bis people, are bereaved of a faithful, profitable pastor, whose place is not eafily filled up. We ministers have lost a bright example, an affectionate brother, a general affiftant as occasion offer'd; a man, whose excessive pains must put the flothful to many blushes. The loss is publick, we have one fewer to promote the kingdom of our Lord, and stand in the gap to avert impending judgments; yea, I fear we may lament the fall of fuch a pillar in the church, as taken away from the evil to come.

WE are stupid, if we weep not for our felves, but as for his part, his sudden death has no terror attending it; for his Lord found him employed as the wise and faithful servants, whom he declared blessed

bleffed. He had preached twice on the SERM. Lord's-day; he preached also on monday, XVI. and had appointed to do the fame on tuefday, but died that morning: God, by Luke xii. death, released him from his labours. Submission to the divine will only, could have reconciled his active foul, long to furvive his work: this trial God prevented, by not fuffering him to live one day beyond his labours. But the rest in heaven, after death, was what he longed for; and, it feems, that by fome prefage, he apprehended he was not far from this; for the last head, in the last book he published, is this; Let us long for the perfection of those spiritual pleasures in the kingdom of glory. And adds, Our love to God, in this world, is a love in motion; in heaven, it will be a love at rest: O when shall that sabbatism come, &c.

His present happiness yields some allay to our sorrow; but yet it is a greater relief under all losses, that our Lord is the king eternal, his word endureth for ever; with 'Tim. i. him is the residue of the Spirit; he has '17. wise ends in this sore dispensation, and can 25.

make it work for good.

THAT this end may be attained, be all of you attentive to the voice of God by this rebuke, and comply therewith. Let each impartially enquire, whether you have not a hand in removing this mercy, by your forfeiture. The death of very useful I i 3 ministers,

SERM. ministers (especially when much needed)

XVI. is generally a punishment for some sins of

those who were most concerned in them.

Wherein conscience points to any guilt,
neglect not repentance; and apply to the
blood of Christ by faith, lest even a worse
thing come unto you. Again; see you act
as becomes christians under this providence.

LET the afflicted widow trust in God, as able to fill up the place of the deceased, and the children walk worthy of his name, and not depart from such a father's ways, as too many have done in this degenerate age. How solemnly would he have laid this charge, if he had seen them about him in his dying agonies? O may they find the return of his many recorded prayers!

You who here attended on his ministry, see you live the truths he dispensed, for you are accountable for great advantages. Christ will not account them good servants, who gained but two talents when they received five. Nor is it proper for you to overlook it; that since the death of the eminent Dr. Bates, you have lost two such worthy men, as Mr. Billio, and Mr. Henry, in the midst of their days, and the greatest capacity for service.

MANY observe you, and your influence on our publick interest, as Dissenters, is very considerable. Therefore it's your concern, unanimously to get a well qualified

pastor:

pastor: But regard sincerely the real benefit SERM. of your souls, in the choice you make; for XVI. if lower matters govern your inclinations, it discovers carnality of mind, and will grow more so, if indulged in this instance.

WE ministers are hereby called to double our care in serving the designs of our LORD; we have sewer hands, and may soon meet with harder work. The aspect of things warns us to apply ourselves to get more wisdom, faith, and fortitude; that we may neither mistake our duty, or treacherously desert it in the greatest trials.

FINALLY, It's incumbent on all to lay to heart the suddenness of your pastor's death. When he left you, he was likelier to live than many of us, and no fymptom of any danger till within a very few hours before his diffolution. We must be stupid, unless it excite us to pray, Lord, teach us Pf. xxxix. to know how frail we are! and to endea-4. vour fo to know the frailty of your state, as to be always ready. O get oil in your Mat. xxiv. lamps, and those lamps trimmed. He that 44. may die without warning, has reason to see that he delay not repentance, nor trifle in what eternity depends on. He who applies Pfal, xc. his beart to wisdom, must so number his 12. days, as to finish the proper business of every day in its day; for the morrow is not ours; and if it come, its own work is affigned with it.

Ii4

IT will be vain to wish we could recal SERM. XVI. past time, when conscience represents the many abuses and neglects of a past life now ending. The fummons may be fo hafty, that you may not have many moments to fet heart or house in order.

THEREFORE take care that your purfuits of this world be not excessive, left Luke xii. you be arrested by that voice, Thou fool, this night thy foul shall be required of thee. When you are tempted, remember you may be cut off in the very act of fin, as Num.xxv. Zimri was. Entertain every call to duty, 14. and opportunity for fervice and spiritual benefit, with this thought, There is no Eccl. ix. working in the grave, where I must soon John ix. be; the night cometh, wherein no man can work.

You must all confess, that you can't die Acts xiii. fafely, unless you have served your genera-36. tion, are real converts, and in temper of spirit meet for heaven: Nor can you die comfortably, unless your graces flourish, your fruit abound, and have at least a grounded hope of your interest in Christ with a vital fense of his favour. These are too great, too necessary, and too difficult to be postponed, or negligently applied to by men, who are crushed before the moth. The greatest haste, and the utmost dili-19. gence, are scarce enough to quiet us, when we realize how much depends upon a life **fubject** 

Job iv.

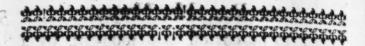
4.

fubject to be cut off in a moment, by a SERM. thousand accidents. Happiest he, who XVI. foonest enters into wisdom's paths, passeth in Pet. iv. the whole time of his sojourning here, with interest folicitous care in discharging all present duty, and improving all present helps. This is the way to finish well.

This finishing well, was a sentence oft made use of by my deceased brother, and therefore I conclude, with an importunate desire, that we may have a solemn regard thereto in all our sacred and civil trans-

actions.





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PREFACE to Mr. SAMUEL CLARK's Ordination Sermon at St. Albans, Sept. 17. 1712. Shewing the Method and Solemnity of Presbyterian Ordination.

To the impartial READER.



HEN mistakes contribute to our w unchristian heats and prejudices, they ought to be rectified by such as are desirous that peace and mo-

deration may prevail by all just methods. Nor can a true account displease any, except they bave some evil turn to serve, by misrepresent-

ing those who differ from them.

They who are must southout for the ceremonies of the Established Church, call most of the Dissenters Presbyterians; whereas, at the same time, several parties among Dissenters, oppose and brand those as Presbyterians to whom that name is most proper, on account of their different principles and practices in fundry points, and particularly in what concerns the ministerial office and ordination. be no just cause of offence to either side, that I give a narrative how we Presbyterians admit and ordain men to the order of presbyters. Several

Several among us (notwithstanding past discouragements) being defirous to subserve the interest of the christian religion, have defigned one or more of their most hopeful sons, to be preachers of the everlasting gospel. To effect which good purpose, they carefully seek and chuse what they esteem the best and safest belps, for their education in all such learning as tends to qualify them for that sacred office. The course of their studies being finished,

and their behaviour promising, they are, at a fit age, presented before such of our pastors as are appointed to examine candidates for the

ministry.

These ministers give the proposed person some controverted theological question in Latin, upon which he frames an exegefis; this he delivers, and fustains the orthodox side of the question, in the same language, against all op-Some time after this disputation, he preacheth in English, before the ministers, on fine practical text, which they had given him. In this part of his exercise, after he has prayed, be analizeth the text, raiseth proper observations, proves what he afferts by scripture and reason, and then applies his subject in order to practice, with motives and directions.

When this is finished, he is strictly examined as to his skill in the Greek and Hebrew text of scripture, and also in philosophy and scripture chronology; and all present are at liberty to propose such questions as they think fit, con-

cerning

cerning any difficult texts of scripture, and any points in doctrinal and casuistical divinity: To all which questions he is obliged to answer.

After which examination, he is defired to withdraw, and the judgment of the ministers concerning his seriousness, and the sufficiency of all his performances, is asked. If they approve not of the same, he is called in, and gravely informed of his defects, and advised to apply himself to study with more diligence; for they are obliged to delay his admission, till

be is better qualified.

But if they declare a full satisfaction, then, upon sufficient testimonials of his sober and godly conversation, he is licensed to preach as a probationer for some time. When thus licensed, he becomes a chaplain in some good family, or supplieth, occasionally, where there's need, or assisteth some pastor, that by exercise, study, and experience, he may be both prepared for a more extensive stated charge, and the ordainers and binifilf may to more affured of his capacity, and the fixedness of his purpose to discharge the office which he is designed to undertake.

Except in necessary cases he remaineth a probationer, until he is called to a stated charge, by a congregation to whom his occasional preaching was acceptable. The peoples desire being fignified to the senior pastors when they meet, they enquire if the call be regular, and demand good proof of the candidate's sober and prudent behaviour since he was licensed to

preach.

preach. Having received satisfaction in these and the like matters, they confent to his being ordained, and that it be performed in the fol-

lowing manner:

The day of ordination is observed as a Fast. The ordainers are senior Pastors, who were ordained presbyters. When they come together into the congregation, some of them pray suitably to the occasion, adding fervent petitions for the catholick church, these nations, the Queen's majesty, the Protestant succession in the house of Hanover, &c. and read a proper

portion of scripture.

One of them preacheth a sermon relating to the ministerial office, as to its institution, duties, and privileges. Then one of the most aged pastors, with great seriousness, appoints the candidate to make a publick confession of bis faith, which he performs: (having composed it himself before-hand.) If this be esteemed orthodox, the pastor proceeds to ask him, What which he defireth this order? Then he propofeth the more effential duties incumbent on a gospel minister, and demands his promise to perform each of them: This he engageth with the greatest solemnity.

After the answers are approved, the said pastor asketh, whether he dedicateth himself to the Lord Jesus, to serve him in the work of the ministry? To which he publickly declares his consent, as in the presence of God and the

whole affembly.

If he who is to be set apart, is invited to be a pastor of a particular church, the call from the people is mentioned, and the foresaid minister enquireth of such as elected him, whether they abide by that call, and accept of him to be their pastor; and also promise to submit to him, and encourage him, by performing what the Lord Jesus appointed to be done by a people to their pastor. To those, one of them, in the name of the rest, expressed their consent.

Then turning to him who is to be ordained, he demandeth if he accepteth of this call from that people, and promifeth to discharge the office of a pastor, as under special relation to that particular church, although he is to be ordained a minister in the catholick visible church?

To which he declareth his consent.

Satisfaction being given as to each of these matters, all the presbyters present come together, and the candidate kneeling in the midst of them, the pastor who proposed the questions, prayeth over him, imploring the divine presence, praising God for instituting this office, qualifying men for it from age to age, and rendring it successful to the salvation of many. Then also prays for the pardon of their own offences, and finful defects, and of the past sins of the person to be ordained; and joining their thanksgivings to the God of all grace, for the gifts and graces of his Spirit conferred on this his servant, they all lay their hands upon his head, and set him apart, in the name of the Lord Jesus, to the office and work of the gospel VOL. II. ministry, Kk

ministry, with authority to preach the gospel, administer the sacraments and discipline of Christ, and to perform all other things which, by divine institution, belong to the order of a presbyter; and then, with petitions suited to the case of one invested with the ministerial office, they commit him to the grace of God through Christ Jesus.

When this prayer is ended, all the ministers give him the right hand of fellowship as a bro-

ther.

Immediately the same, or another pastor, addresset bimself to this ordained brother, solemnly charging him to fulfil his ministry, adding directions and encouragements to the faithful discharge of his duty, whatever difficulties or danger attend it.

This folemn work is concluded with prayers for the ordained, and his people; and finging a proper pfalm, the affembly is dismissed with

the bleffing.

This is a true specimen of our method in ordaining our ministers; which is published without a design of restlecting on the different way of any others, who act by rules they judge more agreeable to divine institution: But my purpose is to vindicate ourselves from such aspersions as represent us careless of the honour of the ministry, by a disregard of the qualifications of such as we allow to be preachers among us.

In this account I have confined myself to the ordination of a person licensed upon passing trials,

trials, and being examined by us; yet I must inform you, that we sometimes have ordained persons, upon testimonials of their being duly licensed by other ministers, and therefore we omitted the repetition of their trials; but we now see need of much caution herein, for we have been imposed on by some persons, who are since received by others, but had been rejected by us, if their lives and abilities had been examined by our ministers about this city.

If any object, that we want the concurrence of a diocesan prelate, I answer, we cannot obtain that, except we submit to such terms as we judge to be finful: Nor can we think fuch a bishop essential to ordination, being sure that, in scripture, presbyters are called bishops, and all the qualifications, duties, trust, power, privileges, and bonour of both, are the same. Neither did any, except the apostles and evangelists, in the first ages of the christian church, pretend to a pastoral superiority over such presbyters as statedly administred the Lord's-supper to fixed distinct congregations; but bishops were no others than pastors of particular churches, capable of communicating in one place, having some presbyters to assist them. That the bishops then, were no other than the present rectors of a parish, who have assistants, is fully proved by many; as the learned Mr. Jemison, in three books \*, and the author of, The clear account of the ancient episcopacy.

Kk2

The

<sup>\*</sup> Cyprianus Isotimus. Nazian. Querelæ, &c.

## 516 PREFACE to Mr. S. Clark's

The identity of the order of bishops and presbyters, was the unanimous judgment of our reformers, and it's but lately that any Protestants pretended to say more against Presbyterian ordinations, than that they were uncanonical, by human laws, where bishops are established.

What a change must there be in the prospect of those, who arrive to that height, as to nullify the baptism of all such as are baptised by presbyters, if they are not ordained by diocesan bishops? And I hear some are so infa-

tuated as to rebaptife them.

I think this case may be left to any impartial person, who will consider, I. Whom they call laymen. 2. What some of the things are which respect these, who call that a lay-baptism which we administer. 3. What are the natural effects and consequences of their wild uncharitable opinion.

1. Whom do they call laymen?

You see they are those of our ministers, who were designed and educated for the ministry; they were examined by capable judges, and found qualified for that trust. (Yea, some refused by us as insufficient, have been entertained by others.) Moreover, they are under the ministerial vow, self-dedicated to serve Christ in the work of the ministry; elected by the church, and solemnly ordained thereto, by fasting and prayer, and imposition of the hands of the presbytery. The ordainers are senior pastors of particular churches. Many of them have

bave affiftants, and therefore come nearest to the primitive bishops; and they were either ordained by diocesan bishops, or by such as were so ordained. This I mention, not as if I thought the canonical succession of these bishops ab origine, can be proved by the Romish church,

or any other.

Are our ministers justly esteemed laymen after all this, and after God has owned the labours of many of them by his special presence and blessing? When these baptise any persons with water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, may those be accounted persons that are not baptized at all? Are those still undedicated, and without any feal of the covenant?

2. Consider some few things with respect to

those who call ours lay-baptism.

They agree, that mere presbyters are to lay on hands with the bishop in ordination. They would be thought to tread exactly in the steps of their predecessors; whereas, till the time of King James I. the midwives were allowed to baptise in case of necessity. think baptism necessary to salvation; and as sons of the church, they esteem it a great sin to be rebaptised; they are obliged to admit those who are baptised by us, to the Lord'ssupper, unless excommunicated. They call them brethren at the grave, and declare they had good hope of their falvation. The church would not appoint them to do fuch things to persons baptised by us, unless they judged them vifible visible christians, and sealed by a baptism which is not a nullity; for it allows not such charitable prayers to be said over the infants of their own communion, if they die unbaptised. Or can these men forget, that the canons require, and that our people were not long since punishable, if they resused to commu-

nicate several times in a year?

Is it not strange these uncharitable novelists call themselves the only true sons of that church? But I the less wonder at this, when I consider the profane silliness of such of them as espouse the sentiments of a late man of very great learning, and as weak judgment; for on the one band, they encourage those to sin boldly, who, by deferting us, are become their great supporters; for they say their souls are mortal, because they were baptised by us: And, on the other hand, their own most furious zealots are in great danger, to murmur and repent, that they were baptifed by fuch as are episcopally ordained, as being thereby made to be immortal: For the behaviour of most of them, testifies they would gladly part with all their bopes of heaven, to become freed from all their danger and fears of eternal torment.

3. Consider the natural effects and consequences of this wild and uncharitable opinion.

Were not many of the conformist ministers baptised by such as were not ordained by bishops? Those ministers are not visible christians, if their baptism was a nullity; and consequently they who were not christians, consecrated

crated the Lord's-supper and baptised, when all these administrations were nullities. Thus are they content to be no christians all this while, and profanely to usurp what did not belong to them, rather than we shall not be

laymen.

Many of our best bishops are known to have no other baptism, than by such as we are; if it is null, what becomes of their ordinations? For either an ordination by one who is no visible christian, must be valid, or they who were ordained by them, are no presbyters; and so whatever they performed as presbyters, is null and insignificant. King Charles I. was baptised by a Scotch presbyter; must be be esteemed no christian when he died?

The reformed churches must be no churches of Christ, and have no more covenant-security for eternal life, than the Pagan world; and both their dead infants and ours must be out of the pale of the church, and damned, unless

they are mortal, and died like beafts.

What confusions and tormenting scruples must all serious people come under, if they once believe this new contrivance? Every one must be put to enquire, Was he who baptised me, ordained by a diocesan bishop? and was that bishop baptised by a minister who was ordained by a diocesan bishop? And so forward.

Will they not next be put upon scrupling their baptism, from an uncertainty about the

priest's intention?

It were a bappy matter, that all such who feem very charitable to the papal church, did no more consent with her in her proud usurpations, than they do in this one point of the validity of lay-baptism. But blessed be God who has given us a gospel that affords a sirmer assurance for the safety and comfort of all fincere believers; and that, as yet, there are many of the reverend bishops and clergy, who bave more charity and wisdom, than to comply with such an introduction, both to the ruin of vital substantial religion, and to the triumph of Papists, who will as boldly nullify those mens ordination by bishops, whom they account hereticks, as they do ours for want of bishops. That God would increase gospel light, and christian love, is the earnest prayer of thy fervant in our common Lord,



NICVM Daniel Williams.

FINIS.

